PASTICHE AND PREJUDICE

By Max Beerbohm

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London: William Heinemann

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PASTICHE AND PREJUDICE

BY

A. B. WALKLEY

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

First published . . SEPTEMBER, 1921.
Reprinted . . . DECEMBER, 1921.

Reprinted, by the courtesy of the Proprietors, from THE TIMES.

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PASTICHE

WRITING of Lamennais, Renan says: "Il créa avec des réminiscences de la Bible et du langage ecclésiastique cette manière harmonieuse et grandiose qui réalise le phénomène unique dans l'histoire littéraire d'un pastiche de génie." Renan was nothing if not fastidious, and "unique" is a hard word, for which I should like to substitute the milder "rare." *Pastiches* "of genius" are rare because genius is rare in any kind, and more than ever rare in that kind wherein the writer deliberately forgoes his own natural, instinctive form of expression for an alien form. But even fairly plausible *pastiches* are rare, for the simple reason that though, with taste and application, and above all an anxious care for style, you may succeed in mimicking the literary form of another author or another age, it is impossible for you to reproduce their spirit—since no two human beings in this world are identical. Perhaps the easiest of all kinds is the theatrical "imitation," because all that is to be imitated is voice, tone, gesture—an actor's words not being his own—yet I have never seen one that got beyond parody. The sense of an audience is not fine enough to appreciate exact imitation; it demands exaggeration, caricature.

Parody, indeed, is the pitfall of all *pastiche*. Even Mr. Max Beerbohm, extraordinarily susceptible and responsive to style as he is, did not escape it in that delightful little book of his wherein, some years ago, he imitated many of our contemporary authors. I can think of but a single instance which faithfully reproduces not only the language but almost the spirit of the authors imitated—M. Marcel Proust's volume of "Pastiches et Mélanges." The only stricture one can pass on it, if stricture it be, is that M. Proust's Balzac and St. Simon and the rest are a little "more Royalist than the King," a little more like Balzac and St. Simon than the originals themselves; I mean, a little too intensely, too concentratedly, Balzac and St. Simon. But Marcel Proust is one of my prejudices. To say that his first two books, "Swann" and "Les Jeunes Filles," have given me more exquisite pleasure than anything in modern French literature would not be enough—I should have to say, in all modern literature. Mrs. Wharton, I see from the "Letters," sent Henry James a copy of "Swann" when it first came out (1913): I wish we could have had his views of it. It offers another kind of psychology from Henry James's, and he would probably have said, as he was fond of saying, that it had more "saturation" than "form." But I am wandering from my subject of *pastiche*.

I was present one afternoon at a curious experiment in theatrical *pastiche*. This was a rehearsal

of a rehearsal of the screen scene from *The School for Scandal*, which was supposed to be directed by Sheridan himself. Rather a complicated affair, because Miss Lilian Braithwaite was supposed to be playing not Lady Teazle but Mrs. Abington playing Lady Teazle, Mr. Gilbert Hare had to play Mr. Parsons playing Sir Peter, and so forth—histrionics, so to speak, raised to the second power. To tell the truth, I think the middle term tended to fall out. It was easy enough for the players to make themselves up after the originals in the Garrick Club picture of the screen scene, but how these originals spoke or what their personal peculiarities were, on or off the stage, who shall now say ? There you have the difference between fact and fiction. Lady Teazle and Sir Peter, having no existence save in the book of the play, are producible from it at any time, as " real " as they ever were, but Mrs. Abington and Mr. Parsons are not fixed in a book, and their reality died with them. Naturally enough the actual scene written by Sheridan " went " with very much greater force than the setting of conversations, interruptions, etc., in which it was embedded, for the simple reason that the one part had had the luck to be imagined by Sheridan and the other had not. But as a *pastiche* this new part, written round the old, seemed to me on the whole very well done ; there was hardly a word that Sheridan and his friends *might* not have said. Just one, however, there noticeably was. Mr. Gerald du Maurier (as

Sheridan) was made to tell Mr. Leon Quartermaine (as Charles) that, in his laughter at the discovery of Lady Teazle, he was not to expect the "sympathy of the audience." *That*, I feel sure, was an anachronism, a bit of quite modern theatrical lingo. I should guess that it came to us from the French, who are fond of talking of a *rôle sympathique*. Mr. du Maurier, if any one, must remember his father's delightful sketch of English people shopping in Normandy, when the artful shopwoman is cajoling a foolish-faced Englishman with "le visage de monsieur m'est si sympathique." The Italian *simpatico* is, of course, even more hard-worked. I felt sure, then, as I say, about the anachronism; but I am quite aware that it is never safe to trust to one's instinct in these matters. It is by no means impossible that some one may triumphantly produce against me a newspaper or book of 1775 which speaks of "the sympathy of the audience." The unexpected in these cases does occasionally happen.

And certainly any one who has tried his hand at a *pastiche* of a dead and gone author will have frequently been astonished, not at the antiquity but at the modernity of the style. Language changes less rapidly than we are apt to suppose. The bad writers seem to get old-fashioned earliest—because, I suppose, they yield most easily to ephemeral tricks of speech. For example, Fanny Burney, who, I cannot but think, wrote a bad style, and in her later books (as Macaulay pointed out) a kind of debased

Johnsonese, is now decidedly old-fashioned. But Jane Austen, whose style, though scarcely brilliant, was never bad, is not. A modern Mr. Collins would not talk of " elegant females "—but even then he was put forward as ridiculous for doing so. Jane was fond of " the chief of the day " and " the harp was bringing." These phrases are *passées*, but I doubt if you will find many others.

Our sense of the past, in fact, may illude us. And that reminds me of Henry James's solitary *pastiche*, his posthumous (and fragmentary) " Sense of the Past." The " past " he deals with is, roughly, the Jane Austen period, and I think his language would very much have astonished Jane Austen. For one thing, they didn't colloquially emphasize in her day as Henry James makes them do. I take a page at random :—" He mustn't be *too* terribly clever for us, certainly ! We enjoy immensely your being so extraordinary ; but I'm sure you'll take it in good part if I remind you that there *is* a limit." Is this our ultra-modern Mrs. Brookenham speaking ? No, it is Mrs. Midmore, somewhere about 1820. To be more exact, it is Henry James speaking with the emphasis that always abounded in his novels and his letters and his talk. Again : " I can't keep off that strangeness of my momentary lapse." That doesn't sound to my ear a bit like 1820. Again : " It must have been one of your pale passions, as you call 'em, truly—so that even if her ghost does hover I shan't be afraid of so very thin a shade."

Note the " 'em," the author's timid little speck of antique colour, but note also how the speaker carries on the " ghost " figure—in a way that is signed " Henry James, 19— " all over. The fact is, Henry James, with his marked, individual, curiously " modern " style, was the last man to express himself in an alien style, particularly the more simple style of an earlier age. To write a pure *pastiche* you must begin by surrendering, putting clean away your own personality—how otherwise are you to take on another's ?

I have no illusions about the essays in *pastiche* to be found in the earlier of the following papers. If they do not always fall below parody, they never rise above it. Occasional fragments of authentic text will be recognized at a glance. " These Things are but Toyes."

AN ARISTOTELIAN FRAGMENT

In the neighbourhood of Wardour Street, where the princes of the film hold their Court, a legislative code for film-making, a "Poetics" of the film, by some *maestro di color che sanno*, has long been yearned for. If only, they say, if only the *maestro* himself, the great Aristotle, had been alive to write it! After all, kinematograph is Greek, isn't it? It seems to cry aloud, somehow, for its code by the great Greek authority. Well, they little knew what luck was in store for them!

To-day comes a startling piece of news from the East. A certain Major Ferdinand M. Pinto, O.B.E., R.E., whether on military duty or on furlough the report does not say, has been sojourning with the monks of Mount Porthos, and, in the most singular manner, has discovered in the possession of his hosts a precious treasure of which they were entirely ignorant. It was a Greek manuscript, and, as the Reverend Prior laughingly observed, it was Greek to them. It seems that—such is the licence of modern manners even in monasteries—the monks have lately taken to smoking, and to using what in lay circles are called "spills." Now on the spill

which the Major was lighting for his cigar there suddenly stared him in the face the words

ὥσπερ Ἀγάθων λέγει

and the name Agathon thrilled him with memories of a certain Oxford quad, with dear "old Strachan" annoying the Master by wondering why Agathon should have said anything so obvious as that "it is probable that many things should happen contrary to probability." To examine the spill, all the spills collected, was the work of a moment. They proved, at a glance, to be an entirely unknown MS. of the "Poetics," more complete even than the Parisian, and with new readings transcending even the acutest conjectures of Vahlen. But, greatest find of all, there was disclosed—though with unfortunate *lacunæ* caused by the monks' cigars—an entirely new chapter inquiring into the structure of the Moving Picture Drama. Through the courtesy of the Pseudo-Hellenic Society I am favoured with a translation of this chapter, and a few passages, which seemed of more general interest, are here extracted.

"As we have said," the MS. begins, "it is a question whether tragedy is to be judged in itself or in relation also to the audience. But it is another story (ἄλλος λόγος) with the moving pictures. For it is not clear whether they have an 'itself' at all, or, if they have, where this self is to be found, whether on the screen, or in the lens of the camera,

or in the head of the photographic artist. Whereas there is no doubt (save in very inclement weather) about the audience. They are to be judged, then, solely in relation to the audience. And, for this reason, they do not resemble tragedy, whose action, we said, must be whole, consisting of a beginning, a middle, and an end. For the audience may arrive at the end of a picture play, and though, in due time, the beginning will come round again, the audience may not have the patience to wait for it. Some audiences prefer to arrive in the middle and to proceed to the end, and then to end with the beginning. By this means the general sense of confusion in human affairs is confirmed in the picture theatre, and in this sense, but only in this sense, the picture drama may be said to be, like tragedy, an imitation of life.

" Nor can it be said of picture drama, as it was of tragedy, that the element of plot is more important than the element of character. For here neither element is important. The important element now is motion. Any plot will serve the picture poet's purpose (indeed most of them take them ready-made from those prose epics known as ' shockers '), and any characters likewise (it will suffice if these be simplified types or ' masks '). The essence of the matter is that all should be kept moving. And as moving objects are best seen to be moving when they are moving quickly, the picture poet will contrive that his horses shall always, as Homer says,

devour the ground and his motor cars be 'all out.' . . . Unity of plot—when there is a plot—does not, as some persons think, consist in the unity of the hero. It consists in the final dwelling together in unity of the hero and his bride. Final must be understood as posterior to the pursuit of the bride by other men, who may be either white or red. Red men are better, as more unbridled in their passions than white. As Æschylus first introduced a second actor in tragedy, so an American poet, whose name is too barbarous to be written in Greek, introduced the red man in picture drama. . . .

"With regard to the hero and his bride, though their characters should, as in tragedy, be morally good (χρηστά), it is chiefly necessary that their persons should be kinematographically good or good on the film. For at every peripety of the action they must become suddenly enlarged by the device of the photographer, so that every furrow of the knitted brow and every twitch of the agitated mouth is shown as large as life, if not larger. It is, in fact, by this photographic enlargement that the critical turns of the action are marked and distinguished, in the absence of the tragic element of diction. Where the tragic actor talks big, the picture player looks big. Nevertheless, the element of diction is not entirely wanting. Sentences (which should comprise as many solecisms as possible) may be shown on the screen, descriptive of what the players are doing or saying. But the more skilful

players habitually say something else than what is thus imputed to them, thereby giving the audience the additional interest of conjecturing what they actually do say in place of what they ought to have said.

. . . " Picture poetry is a more philosophical and liberal thing than history ; for history expresses the particular, but picture poetry the not too particular. The particular is, for example, what Alcibiades did or suffered. The not too particular is what Charlie Chaplin did or suffered. But the moving pictures do to some extent show actual happenings, in order to reassure people by nature incredulous. For what has not happened we do not at once feel sure to be possible ; but what has happened is manifestly possible ; otherwise it would not have happened. On the whole, however, as the tragic poet should prefer probable impossibilities to improbable possibilities, the picture poet should go, as Agathon says, one better, and aim at improbable impossibilities." . . .

MR. SHAKESPEARE DISORDERLY

At the meeting preliminary to "Warriors' Day" I was wending my way along the corridor of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, when I encountered an amphibious-looking figure with the mien of one of Mr. W. W. Jacobs's people, but attired in the classic tunic and sandals of a Greek of the best period. Knowing that the meeting was to include all sorts and conditions of theatrical men, I taxed him with being somebody out of *Orphée aux Enfers* or *La Belle Hélène*. He said it was not a bad shot, but, as a matter of fact, he was a ferryman, "saving your honour's reverence, name o' Charon." "A ferryman?" said I; "then you must be from the Upper River, Godstow way." "No, sir," he answered, "I ply my trade on the Styx, and I've brought over a boatful of our tip-toppers—our intelli-gents-you-are they calls 'em in the Elysian Fields—to this 'ere meetin'. Precious dry work it is, too, sir," he added, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "Where are they?" I asked in high excitement. "In this 'ere box, sir, where the management have allowed them to sit incog." "And who, my good fellow, are they?" "Well,

sir, let me see; there's Mr. William Shakespeare, one of the most pop'lar of our gents and the neatest hand at nectar punch with a toast in it. Then there's Mr. David Garrick, little Davy, as they calls 'im (though the other one, 'im who's always a-slingin' stones at the giants, isn't no great size, neither), and there's 'is friend Dr. Samuel Johnson, a werry harbitrary cove, and there's Mrs. Siddons, an 'oly terror of a woman, sir, as you might say. Likewise, there's Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Edmund Kean, both on 'em gents with a powerful thirst—just like mine this blessed mornin', sir." At this second reminder I gave him wherewithal to slake his thirst, directed him to the bar, and, as soon as he was out of sight, slipped noiselessly into the back of the box, where I hid behind the overcoats.

Mr. Shakespeare was beckoning Mrs. Siddons to his side. "Come hither, good mistress Sal" (this to the majestic Sarah, the Tragic Muse!), "and prythee, dearest chuck, sit close, for 'tis a nipping and an eager air, and poor Will's a-cold."

Mrs. S.—Sir, you are vastly obleeging, but where's the chair?

Dr. Johnson.—Madam, you who have so often occasioned a want of seats to other people, will the more easily excuse the want of one yourself.

Mr. Shakespeare.—Marry come up! Wouldst not sit in my lap, Sal? 'Tis not so deep as a well nor so wide as a church door, but 'twill serve.

Mrs. S. (*scandalized but dignified*).—Sir, I am

sensible of the honour, but fear my train would incommode the Immortal Bard.

MR. SHAKESPEARE.—Oh, Immortal Bard be——

MR. GARRICK (*hastily*).—I perceive, sir, a stir among the company. The gentleman who is taking the chair has notable eyebrows; he must be——

MR. SHAKESPEARE.—Master George Robey. I've heard of him and his eyebrows.

MR. G.—No, no, 'tis Sir Arthur Pinero, an actor-dramatist like yourself, sir.

MR. SHAKESPEARE.—Beshrew me, but I would hear the chimes at midnight with him and drink a health unto his knighthood. (*Sings.*) "And let me the canakin clink, clink, and——"

THE HOUSE (*indignantly*).—Sh-h-h!

MR. SHAKESPEARE.—A murrain on these gallants! They have no ear for a catch and should get them to a monastery. But I'll sit like my grandsire, carved in alabaster. Who's the young spark, now speaking?

DR. J. (*shocked*).—The young spark, sir, is His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

MR. SHERIDAN.—Egad! This reminds me of old times, but the young man is not a bit like my friend Prinny. And though *I* managed Drury Lane, I never got Prinny on *my* stage.

DR. J.—Sir, your Prinny never had so good a cause to be there. He only *thought* he fought in the wars; but this Prince is a real ex-Service man,

pleading for the ex-Service men, his comrades in arms. He has been a soldier, and not a man of us in this box but wishes he could say as much for himself. Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier; but he will think less meanly if he can help those who have. That is the very purpose of this numerous assembly.

MR. SHAKESPEARE.—Oh, most learned doctor, a Daniel come to judgment! I' faith I am most heartily of thy mind, and would drink a loving toast to the young Prince and another to the ex-Service fellows, and eke a third to this—how runs it?—this numerous assembly. (*Sings.*) "And let me the canakin clink, clink, and——"

THE HOUSE (*in a frenzy of indignation*).—Sh-h-h! Turn him out! (*Hisses.*)

MR. SHAKESPEARE.—What! the "bird"! Well-a-day, this isn't the first time they've hissed my Ghost.

MR. KEAN.—Sir, they've hissed *me*!

MR. SHAKESPEARE.—Ha! say'st thou, honest Ned! But thou wast a jackanapes to let thyself be caught with the Alderman's wife and——

MRS. S. (*icily*).—Mr. Shakespeare, there are ladies present.

MR. SHERIDAN (*whispering to Dr. J.*).—But what does little Davy here, doctor? He has always been represented as very saving.

DR. J.—No, sir. Davy is a liberal man. He has given away more money than any man in England.

There may be a little vanity mixed, but he has shown that money is not his first object.

At this moment Charon popped his head in at the door, pulling his forelock, and said, " Time, gen'lemen, time ! " The house was rising and I took the opportunity to step back, unperceived, into the corridor. Mr. Shakespeare led the procession out, declaring that, as he had come in a galliard, he must return in a coranto, and offering to dance it with Mrs. Siddons, who, however, excused herself, saying that she knew no touch of it, though she had of old taken great strides in her profession. Dr. Johnson turned back, when half way out, to touch the doorpost. Mr. Garrick sallied forth arm-in-arm with Mr. Kean and Mr. Sheridan. " Egad ! " chuckled Mr. Sheridan, " Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy," and subsequently caused some confusion by tumbling down the stairs and lying helpless at the bottom. When the attendants ran to his assistance and asked his name, he said he was Mr. Wilberforce. As they emerged under the portico the crowd outside raised a loud cheer, and Mr. Shakespeare doffed his plumed cap and bowed graciously to right and left until they told him that the crowd were cheering the Prince of Wales, when he looked crestfallen and called those within earshot " groundlings " and " lousy knaves." As he jumped into a taxi, I heard him direct the driver to the " Mermaid," when Dr. Johnson, running up and puffing loudly, cried, " A tavern chair is the throne

of human felicity. But the 'Mitre' is the nearer. Let us go there, and I'll have a frisk with you." And as the taxi disappeared down Catherine Street, my ear caught the distant strain, "And let me the canakin clink, clink."

SIR ROGER AT THE RUSSIAN BALLET

No. 1000. Wednesday, October 29th, 19—.

Saltare elegantius quam necesse est probæ.

Sallust.

My friend Sir Roger de Coverley, when we last met together at the club, told me that he had a great mind to see the Muscovite dancers with me, assuring me at the same time that he had not been at a playhouse these twenty years. When he learnt from me that these dancers were to be sought in Leicester Fields, he asked me if there would not be some danger in coming home late, in case the Mohocks should be abroad. "However," says the knight, "if Captain Sentry will make one with us to-morrow night, I will have my own coach in readiness to attend you; for John tells me he has got the fore-wheels mended." Thinking to smoak him, I whispered, "You must have a care, for all the streets in the West are now up," but he was not to be daunted, saying he minded well when all the West Country was up with Monmouth; and the Captain bid Sir Roger fear nothing, for that he had put on the same sword which he made use of at the battle of Steenkirk.

When we had convoyed him in safety to Leicester

Fields, and he had descended from his coach at the door, he straightway engaged in a conference with the door-keeper, who is a notable prating gossip, and stroak'd the page-boy upon the head, bidding him be a good child and mind his book. As soon as we were in our places my old friend stood up and looked about him with that pleasure which a mind seasoned with humanity naturally feels in itself, at the sight of a multitude of people who seem pleased with one another, and partake of the same common entertainment. He seemed to be no less pleased with the gay silks and satins and sarsenets and brocades of the ladies, but pish'd at the strange sight of their bare backs. "Not so bare, neither," I whispered to him, "for if you look at them through your spy-glass you will see they wear a little coat of paint, which particularity has gained them the name of Picts." "I warrant you," he answered, with a more than ordinary vehemence, "these naked ones are widows—widows, Sir, are the most perverse creatures in the world." Thinking to humour him, I said most like they were war widows, whereon the good knight lifted his hat to our brave fellows who fought in the Low Countries, and offered several reflections on the greatness of the British land and sea forces, with many other honest prejudices which naturally cleave to the heart of a true Englishman.

Luckily, the Muscovites then began dancing and posturing in their pantomime which they call *Petrouchka* and the old gentleman was wonderfully

attentive to the antics of the three live *fantoccini*. When the black fellow, as he called the Moor, clove the head of his rival with the scimitar, the knight said he had never looked for such barbarity from a fellow who, but a moment ago, was innocently playing a game of ball, like a child. What strange disorders, he added, are bred in the minds of men whose passions are not regulated by virtue, and disciplined by reason. "But pray, you that are a critic, is this in accordance with your rules, as you call them? Did your Aristotle allow pity and terror to be moved by such means as dancing?" I answered that the Greek philosopher had never seen the Muscovites and that, in any case, we had the authority of Shakespeare for expecting murder from any jealous Moor. "Moreover, these Muscovites dance murder as they dance everything. I love to shelter myself under the examples of great men, and let me put you in mind of Hesiod, who says, 'The gods have bestowed fortitude on some men, and on others a disposition for dancing.' Fortunately the Muscovites have the more amiable gift." The knight, with the proper respect of a country gentleman for classick authority, was struck dumb by Hesiod.

He remained silent during the earlier part of *Schéhérazade* until Karsavina, as the favourite of the Sultan's harem, persuaded the Chief Eunuch to release her orange-tawny favourite, Monsieur Massine, at which the knight exclaimed, "On my word,

a notable young baggage!" I refrained from telling my innocent friend that in the old Arabian tale these tawny creatures were apes. He mightily liked the Sultan's long beard. "When I am walking in my gallery in the country," says he, "and see the beards of my ancestors, I cannot forbear regarding them as so many old patriarchs, and myself as an idle smock-faced young fellow. I love to see your Abrahams and Isaacs, as we have them in old pieces of tapestry with beards below their girdles. I suppose this fellow, with all these wives, must be Solomon." And, his thoughts running upon that King, he said he kept his Book of Wisdom by his bedside in the country and found it, though Apocryphal, more conducive to virtue than the writings of Monsieur La Rochefoucauld or, indeed, of Socrates himself, whose life he had read at the end of the Dictionary. Captain Sentry, seeing two or three wags who sat near us lean with an attentive ear towards Sir Roger, and fearing lest they should smoak the knight, plucked him by the elbow, and whispered something in his ear that lasted until the Sultan returned to the harem and put the ladies and their tawny companions to the sword. The favourite's plunging the dagger into her heart moved him to tears, but he dried them hastily on bethinking him she was a Mahometan, and asked of us, on our way home, whether there was no playhouse in London where they danced true Church of England pantomimes.

PARTRIDGE AT "JULIUS CÆSAR"

Mr. Jones having spent three hours in reading and kissing Sophia's letter, and being at last in a state of good spirits, he agreed to carry an appointment, which he had before made, into execution. This was, to attend Mrs. Miller and her youngest daughter into the gallery at the St. James's playhouse, and to admit Mr. Partridge as one of the company. For, as Jones had really that taste for humour which many affect, he expected to enjoy much entertainment in the criticisms of Partridge; from whom he expected the simple dictates of nature, unimproved, indeed, but likewise unadulterated by art.

In the first row, then, of the first gallery did Mr. Jones, Mrs. Miller, her youngest daughter, and Partridge take their places. Partridge immediately declared it was the finest place he had ever been in. When the first music was played he said it was a wonder how so many fiddlers could play at one time without putting one another out.

As soon as the play, which was Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, began, Partridge was all attention, nor did he break silence till the scene in Brutus's

orchard, when he asked Jones, "What season of the year is it, Sir?" Jones answered, "Wait but a moment and you shall hear the boy Lucius say it is the 14th of March." To which Partridge replied with a smile, "Ay, then I understand why the boy was asleep. Had it been in apple-harvesting time I warrant you he would have been awake and busy as soon as what's-his-name, Squire Brutus, had turned his back." And upon the entreaties of Portia to share Brutus's confidence he inquired if she was not a Somersetshire wench. "For Madam," said he, "is mighty like the housewives in our county, who will plague their husbands to death rather than let 'em keep a secret." Nor was he satisfied with Cæsar's yielding to Calphurnia's objections against his going to the Capitol. "Ay, anything to please your wife, you old dotard," said he; "you might have known better than to give heed to a silly woman's nightmares."

When they came to the Forum scene and the speeches of Brutus and Antony, Partridge sat with his eyes fixed on the orators and with his mouth open. The same passions which succeeded each other in the crowd of citizens succeeded likewise in him. He was at first all for Brutus and then all for Antony, until he learnt that Cæsar had left 75 drachmas to every Roman citizen. "How much is that in our English money?" he asked Jones, who answered that it was about two guineas. At that he looked chapfallen, bethinking him that, though a

round sum, it was not enough to warrant the crowd in such extravagant rejoicing.

"I begin to suspect, Sir," said he to Jones, "this Squire Antony hath not been above hoodwinking us, but he seemed so much more concerned about the matter than the other speaker, Brutus, that I for one couldn't help believing every word he said. Yet I believed the other one, too, when he was talking, and I was mightily pleased with what he said about liberty and Britons never being slaves." "You mean Romans," answered Jones, "not Britons." "Well, well," said Partridge, "I know it is only a play, but if I thought they were merely Romans, and not Britons at heart, I should not care a hang about 'em or what became of 'em."

To say the truth, I believe honest Partridge, though a raw country fellow and ignorant of those dramatic rules which learned critics from the Temple and the other Inns of Court have introduced, along with improved catcalls, into our playhouses, was here uttering the sentiments of nature. Should we be concerned about the fortunes of those ancient Romans were they utter strangers to us and did we not put ourselves in their places, which is as much as to turn them all from Romans into Britons? To be sure, while our imagination is thus turning them, it will not forbear a few necessary amendments for the sake of verisimilitude. For, to name only one particular, no free and independent Briton could imagine himself bribed by so paltry a legacy as a

couple of guineas; but he can multiply that sum in his mind until it shall have reached the much more considerable amount which he will consent to take for his vote at a Westminster election; and thus honour will be satisfied. And the critics aforesaid will then be able to point out to us the advantages of British over Roman liberty, being attended not only with the proud privileges of our great and glorious Constitution, but also with a higher emolument.

Mr. Jones would doubtless have made these reflections to himself had he not, while Partridge was still speaking, been distracted by the sudden appearance in an opposite box of Lady Bellaston and Sophia. As he had only left her ladyship that very afternoon, after a conversation of so private a nature that it must on no account be communicated to the reader, he would have disregarded the imperious signals which she forthwith began making to him with her fan; but the truth is, whatever reluctance he may have felt to rejoin her ladyship at that moment was overborne by his eagerness to approach the amiable Sophia, though he turned pale and his knees trembled at the risk of that approach in circumstances so dangerous. As soon as he had recovered his composure he hastened to obey her ladyship's commands, but on his entry into the box his spirits were again confounded by the evident agitation of Sophia, and, seizing her hand, he stammered, "Madam, I——." "Hoity, toity! Mr.

Jones," cried Lady Bellaston; "do you salute a chit of a girl before you take notice of a dowager? Are these the new manners among people of fashion? It is lucky for my heart that I can call myself a dowager, for I vow to-night you look like a veritable Adonis, and," she added in a whisper too low to be heard by Sophia, "your Venus adores you more madly than ever, you wicked wretch."

Jones was ready to sink with fear. He sat kicking his heels, playing with his fingers, and looking more like a fool, if it be possible, than a young booby squire when he is at first introduced into a polite assembly. He began, however, now to recover himself; and taking a hint from the behaviour of Lady Bellaston, who, he saw, did not intend openly to claim any close acquaintance with him, he resolved as entirely to affect the stranger on his part. Accordingly, he leaned over to Sophia, who was staring hard at the stage, and asked her if she enjoyed the performance. "Pray, don't tease Miss Western with your civilities," interrupted Lady Bellaston, "for you must know the child hath lost her heart this night to that ravishing fellow Ainley, though I tell her to my certain knowledge he is a husband already, and, what is more, a father. These country girls have nothing but sweethearts in their heads." "Upon my honour, madam," cried Sophia, "your ladyship injures me." "Not I, miss, indeed," replied her ladyship tartly, "and if you want a sweetheart, have you not one of the most gallant

young fellows about town ready to your hand in Lord Fellamar? You must be an arrant mad woman to refuse him." Sophia was visibly too much confounded to make any observations, and again turned towards the stage, Lady Bellaston taking the opportunity to dart languishing glances at Jones behind her back and to squeeze his hand; in short, to practise the behaviour customary with women of fashion who desire to signify their sentiments for a gentleman without expressing them in actual speech; when Jones, who saw the agitation of Sophia's mind, resolved to take the only method of relieving her, which was by retiring. This he did, as Brutus was rushing upon his own sword; and poor Jones almost wished the sword might spit him, too, in his rage and despair at what her ladyship had maliciously insinuated about Sophia and Mr. Ainley.

DR. JOHNSON AT THE STADIUM

I AM now to record a curious incident in Dr. Johnson's life, which fell under my own observation ; of which *pars magna fui*, and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be in no way to his discredit.

When I was a boy in the year 1745 I wore a white cockade and prayed for King James, till one of my uncles gave me a shilling on condition that I should pray for King George, which I accordingly did. This uncle was General Cochran ; and it was with natural gratification that I received from another member of that family, Mr. Charles Cochran, a more valuable present than a shilling, that is to say, an invitation to witness the Great Fight at the Stadium and to bring with me a friend. " Pray," said I, " let us have Dr. Johnson." Mr. Cochran, who is much more modest than our other great theatre-manager, Mr. Garrick, feared that Dr. Johnson could hardly be prevailed upon to condescend. " Come," said I, " if you'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well."

I had not forgotten Mrs. Thrale's relation (which she afterwards printed in her " Anecdotes ") that

"Mr. Johnson was very conversant in the art of attack and defence by boxing, which science he had learned from his uncle Andrew, I believe; and I have heard him discourse upon the age when people were received, and when rejected, in the schools once held for that brutal amusement, much to the admiration of those who had no expectation of his skill in such matters, from the sight of a figure which precluded all possibility of personal prowess." This lively lady was, however, too ready to deviate from exact authenticity of narration; and, further, I reflected that, whatever the propensities of his youth, he who had now risen to be called by Dr. Smollett the Great Cham of literature might well be affronted if asked to countenance a prize-fight.

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for him, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus:—"Mr. Cochran, sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to visit his entertainment at the Stadium on Thursday next?" JOHNSON.—"Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Cochran. I will go——" BOSWELL.—"Provided, sir, I suppose, that the entertainment is of a kind agreeable to you?" JOHNSON.—"What do you mean, sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so

ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what kind of entertainment he is to offer his friends ?" BOSWELL.—" But if it were a prize-fight ?" JOHNSON.—" Well, sir, and what then ?" BOSWELL.—" It might bring queer company." JOHNSON.—" My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you ; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever occasionally." Thus I secured him.

As it proved, however, whether by good luck or by the forethought of the ingenious Mr. Cochran, Dr. Johnson could not have found himself in better company than that gathered round him in Block H at the Stadium. There were many members of the Literary Club, among them Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Gibbon, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Mr. R. B. Sheridan. A gentleman present, who had been dining at the Duke of Montrose's, where the bottle had been circulated pretty freely, was rash enough to rally Dr. Johnson about his Uncle Andrew, suggesting that his uncle's nephew might now take the opportunity of exhibiting his prowess in the ring. JOHNSON.—" Sir, to be facetious, it is not necessary to be indecent. I am not for tapping any man's claret, but we see that *thou* hast already tapped his Grace's." BURKE.—" It is remarkable how little gore is ever shed in these contests. Here have we been for half an hour watching—let me see, what are their names ?—

Eddie Feathers and Gus Platts—and not even a bleeding nose between them." REYNOLDS.—" In a previous contest one boxer knocked the other's teeth out." SHERIDAN.—" Yes, but they were false teeth."

At this moment the talk was interrupted by the arrival of the Prince. As His Highness passed Dr. Johnson, my revered friend made an obeisance which was an even more studied act of homage than his famous bow to the Archbishop of York; and he subsequently joined in singing " For he's a jolly good fellow " with the most loyal enthusiasm, repeating the word " fe-ellow " over and over again, doubtless because it was the only one he knew. (" Like a word in a catch," Beauclerk whispered.) I am sorry that I did not take note of an eloquent argument in which he proceeded to maintain that the situation of Prince of Wales was the happiest of any person's in the kingdom, even beyond that of the Sovereign.

But there was still no sign of Beckett and Carpentier, the heroes of the evening, and the company became a little weary of the preliminary contests. A hush fell upon the assembly, and many glanced furtively towards the alley down which the champions were to approach. GIBBON.—" We are unhappy because we are kept waiting. ' Man never is, but always to be, blest.' " JOHNSON.—" And we are awaiting we know not what. To the impatience of expectation is added the disquiet of the unknown."

GARRICK (*playing round his old friend with a fond vivacity*).—"My dear sir, men are naturally a little restless, when they have backed Beckett at 70 to 40." REYNOLDS.—"But, see, the lights of the kinematographers" (we were all abashed by the word in the presence of the Great Lexicographer) "are brighter than ever. I observe all the contestants take care to smile under them." SHERIDAN. —"When they *do* agree, their unanimity is wonderful." JOHNSON.—"Among the anfractuosities of the human mind, I know not if it may not be one, that there is a morbid longing to attitudinize in the 'moving pictures.'"

But at length Beckett and Carpentier made their triumphal entry. Beckett first, quietly smiling, with eyes cast down, Carpentier debonair and lightly saluting the crowd with an elegant wave of the hand. After the pair had stripped and Dr. Johnson had pointed out that "the tenuity, the thin part" in Carpentier's frame indicated greater lightness, if Beckett's girth promised more solid resistance, Mr. Angle invited the company to preserve silence during the rounds and to abstain from smoking. To add a last touch to the solemnity of the moment, Carpentier's supernumerary henchmen (some six or eight, over and above his trainer and seconds) came and knelt by us, in single file, in the alley between Block H and Block E, as though at worship.

What then happened, in the twinkling of an eye, all the world now knows, and knows rather better

than I knew myself at the moment, for I saw Beckett lying on his face in the ring without clearly distinguishing the decisive blow. While Carpentier was being carried round the ring on the shoulders of his friends, being kissed first by his trainer and then by ladies obligingly held up to the ring for the amiable purpose, I confess that I watched Beckett, and was pleased to see he had successfully resumed his quiet smile. As I carried my revered friend home to Bolt Court in a taximetric cabriolet, I remarked to him that Beckett's defeat was a blow to our patriotic pride, whereupon he suddenly uttered, in a strong, determined tone, an apophthegm at which many will start :—" Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel ! " " And yet," said Beauclerk, when I told him of this later, " he had not been kissed by Carpentier."

MY UNCLE TOBY PUZZLED

" 'Tis a pity," cried my father, one winter's night, after reading the account of the Shakespeare Memorial meeting—" 'tis a pity," cried my father, putting my mother's thread-paper into the newspaper for a mark as he spoke,—" that truth, brother Toby, should shut herself up in such impregnable fastnesses, and be so obstinate as to surrender herself up sometimes only upon the closest siege."

The word siege, like a talismanic power, in my father's metaphor, wafting back my uncle Toby's fancy, quick as a note could follow the touch, he opened his ears.

" And there was nothing to shame them in the truth, neither," said my father, " seeing that they had many thousands of pounds to their credit. How could a bishop think there was danger in telling it ? "

" Lord bless us ! Mr. Shandy," cried my mother, " what is all this story about ? "

" About Shakespeare, my dear," said my father.

" He has been dead a hundred years ago," replied my mother.

My uncle Toby, who was no chronologer, whistled " Lillibullero."

" By all that's good and great ! ma'am," cried my father, taking the oath out of Ernulphus's digest, " of course. If it was not for the aids of philosophy, which befriend one so much as they do, you would put a man beside all temper. He is as dead as a doornail, and they are thinking of building a theatre to honour his memory."

" And why should they not, Mr. Shandy ? " said my mother.

" To be sure, there's no reason why," replied my father, " save that they haven't enough money left over after buying a plot of land in Gower Street to build upon."

Corporal Trim touched his Montero-cap and looked hard at my uncle Toby. " If I durst presume," said he, " to give your honour my advice, and speak my opinion in this matter." " Thou art welcome, Trim," said my uncle Toby. " Why then," replied Trim, " I think, with humble submission to your honour's better judgment, I think that had we but a rood or a rood and a half of this ground to do what we pleased with, I would make fortifications for you something like a tansy, with all their batteries, saps, ditches, and palisadoes, that it should be worth all the world's riding twenty miles to go and see it."

" Then thou wouldst have, Trim," said my father, " to palisado the Y.M.C.A."

" I never understood rightly the meaning of that word," said my uncle Toby, " and I am sure

nothing of that name was known to our armies in Flanders."

"'Tis an association of Christian young men," replied my father, "who for the present hold the Shakespeare Memorialists' ground in Gower Street." 'Twas no inconsistent part of my uncle Toby's character that he feared God and reverenced religion. So the moment my father finished his remark my uncle Toby fell a-whistling "Lilli-bullero" with more zeal (though more out of tune) than usual.

"And the money these Christian youths pay for rents," continued my father, "is to be used to maintain a company of strolling players" [Here my uncle Toby, throwing back his head, gave a monstrous, long, loud whew-w-w.], "who are to go up and down the country showing the plays of Shakespeare. Up and down, and that, by the way, is how their curtain went on twenty-two occasions in *Romeo and Juliet*."

"Who says so?" asked my uncle Toby.

"A parson," replied my father.

"Had he been a soldier," said my uncle, "he would never have told such a taradiddle. He would have known that the curtain is that part of the wall or rampart which lies between the two bastions, and joins them."

"By the mother who bore us! brother Toby," quoth my father, "you would provoke a saint. Here have you got us, I know not how, souse into

the middle of the old subject again. We are speaking of Shakespeare and not of fortifications."

"Was Shakespeare a soldier, Mr. Shandy, or a young men's Christian?" said my mother, who had lost her way in the argument.

"Neither one nor t'other, my dear," replied my father (my uncle Toby softly whistled "Lillibullero"); "he was a writer of plays."

"They are foolish things," said my mother.

"Sometimes," replied my father, "but you have not seen Shakespeare's, Mrs. Shandy. And it is for the like of you, I tell you point-blank——"

As my father pronounced the word point-blank my uncle Toby rose up to say something upon projectiles, but my father continued:—

"It is for the like of you that these Shakespeare Memorialists are sending their strolling players around the country, to set the goodwives wondering about Shakespeare, as they wondered about Diego's nose in the tale of the learned Hafen Slawkenbergius."

"Surely the wonderful nose was Cyrano's?" said my mother. "Cyrano's or Diego's, 'tis all one," cried my father in a passion. "Zooks! Cannot a man use a plain analogy but his wife must interrupt him with her foolish questions about it? May the eternal curse of all the devils in——"

"Our armies swore terribly in Flanders," cried my uncle Toby, "but nothing to this."

"As you please, Mr. Shandy," said my mother.

"Where was I?" said my father, in some confusion, and letting his hand fall upon my uncle Toby's shoulder in sign of repentance for his violent cursing.

"You was at Slawkenbergius," replied my uncle Toby.

"No, no, brother, Shakespeare, I was speaking of Shakespeare, and how they were going to carry him round the country because they had not money enough to build a theatre for him in London."

"But could they not hire one?" said my uncle Toby.

"No, for my Lord Lytton said that would be too speculative a venture."

"'Tis a mighty strange business," said my uncle, in much perplexity. "They buy their land, as I understand it, brother, to build a house for Shakespeare in London, but lease it for a house for young Christians instead, and spend their money on sending Shakespeare packing out of London."

"'Tis all the fault of the Londoners," replied my father. "They have no soul for Shakespeare, and for that matter, as I believe, no soul at all."

"A Londoner has no soul, an' please your honour," whispered Corporal Trim doubtingly, and touching his Montero-cap to my uncle.

"I am not much versed, Corporal," quoth my uncle Toby, "in things of that kind; but I suppose God would not leave him without one, any more than thee or me."

LADY CATHERINE AND MR. COLLINS

Elizabeth and Charlotte were seated one morning in the parlour at Hunsford parsonage, enjoying the prospect of Rosings from the front window, and Mr. Collins was working in his garden, which was one of his most respectable pleasures, when the peace of the household was suspended by the arrival of a letter from London :—

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,
"London, *December*, 19—.

"Dear Cousin William,—We have long neglected to maintain a commerce of letters, but I have learned through the public prints of your recent union with an elegant female from Hertfordshire and desire to tender you and your lady my respects in what I trust will prove an agreeable form. I am directing an entertainment at this theatre, which is designed to be in harmony with the general Christmas rejoicings, and, you may rest assured, in no way offends the principles of the Church which you adorn. Will you not honour it by your presence and thus confer an innocent enjoyment upon your lady? In that hope, I enclose a box

ticket for the pantomime on Monday se'nnight and remain you well-wisher and cousin,

"ARTHUR COLLINS."

Smiling to herself, Elizabeth reflected that the two Messrs. Collins might certainly call cousins in epistolary composition, while Charlotte anxiously inquired if the proposal had her William's approval.

"I am by no means of opinion," said he, "that an entertainment of this kind, given by a man of character, who is also my own second cousin, to respectable people, can have any evil tendency; but, before accepting the invitation, it is, of course, proper that I should seek the countenance of Lady Catherine de Bourgh." Accordingly, he lost no time in making his way to Rosings.

Lady Catherine, who chanced to be meditating that very morning on a visit to London for the purchase of a new bonnet and *pèlerine*, was all affability and condescension.

"To be sure, you will go, Mr. Collins," said her ladyship. "I advise you to accept the invitation without delay. It is the duty of a clergyman of your station to refine and improve such entertainments by his presence. Nay," she added, "Sir Lewis highly approved them and *I* myself will go with you." Mr. Collins was overwhelmed by civility far beyond his expectations, and hurried away to prepare Charlotte and Elizabeth for this splendid addition to their party.

Early on the Monday se'nnight they set out for London in one of her ladyship's carriages, for, as Mr. Collins took the opportunity of remarking, she had several, drawn by four post-horses, which they changed at the " Bell " at Bromley. On the way her ladyship examined the young ladies' knotting-work and advised them to do it differently, instructed Elizabeth in the humility of deportment appropriate to the front seat of a carriage, and determined what the weather was to be to-morrow.

When they were at last arrived and seated in their box Lady Catherine approved the spacious dignity of the baronial hall, which, she said, reminded her of the great gallery at Pemberley, but was shocked at the familiarities which passed between the Baron and Baroness Beauxchamps and their page-boy. " These foreign nobles," she exclaimed, " adventurers, I daresay ! It was Sir Lewis's opinion that *all* foreigners were adventurers. No English baron, it is certain, would talk so familiarly to a common domestic, a person of inferior birth, and of no importance in the world. Honour, decorum, prudence, nay, interest, forbid it. With such manners, I do not wonder that the domestic arrangements are in disorder, the very stair-carpet unfastened, and a machine for cleaning knives actually brought into a reception room ! See, they cannot even lay a table-cloth ! " And her ladyship advised Charlotte on the proper way of laying table-cloths, especially in clergymen's families.

After a song of Miss Florence Smithson's Charlotte talked in a low tone with Elizabeth, and her ladyship called out :—" What is that you are saying, Mrs. Collins ? What is it you are talking of ? What are you telling Miss Bennet ? Let me hear what it is."

" We are speaking of music, madam," said Charlotte.

" Of music ! Then pray speak aloud. It is of all subjects my delight. I must have my share in the conversation, if you are speaking of music. There are few people in England, I suppose, who have more true enjoyment of music than myself, or a better natural taste. If I had ever learnt, I should have been a great proficient."

When Cinderella set out for the ball in her coach-and-six with a whole train of running-footmen Lady Catherine signified her approbation. " Young women should always be properly guarded and attended, according to their situation in life. When my niece Georgiana went to Ramsgate last summer, I made a point of her having two men-servants go with her. I am excessively attentive to all those things."

But now they were at the ball, and the box party was all attention. The Prince, dignified and a little stiff, reminded Elizabeth of Mr. Darcy. But guests so strange as Mutt and Jeff, she thought, would never be allowed to pollute the shades of Pemberley. Mr. Collins's usually cold composure forsook him at the sight of the Baroness playing cards with the

Baron on one of her *paniers* as a table, and felt it his duty to apologize to Lady Catherine for the unseemly incident. "If your ladyship will warrant me," he began, "I will point out to my cousin that neither a person of your high station nor a clergyman of the Church of England ought to be asked to witness this licentiousness of behaviour." "And advise him," said her ladyship, "on the authority of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, that *paniers* were never used for this disgraceful purpose. There is no one in England who knows more about *paniers* than myself, for my grandmother, Lady Anne, wore them, and some day Mrs. Jennings, the housekeeper, shall show them to Miss Bennet," for Elizabeth could not forbear a smile, "at Rosings."

The party retired early, for Elizabeth had to be conveyed to her uncle's as far as Gracechurch Street, and Lady Catherine desired the interval of a long night before choosing her new bonnet. It was not until Mr. Collins was once more in his parsonage that he sent his cousin an acknowledgment of the entertainment afforded at Drury Lane, as follows :—

"HUNSFORD, *near* WESTERHAM, KENT,
"*January*, 19—.

"DEAR SIR,—We withdrew from your Christmas entertainment on Monday last with mingled feelings of gratification and reprobation. When I say 'we' I should tell you that my Charlotte and I not only brought with us a Miss Elizabeth Bennet, one of

the friends of her maiden state, but were honoured by the company of the Right Honourable Lady Catherine de Bourgh, widow of Sir Lewis de Bourgh, whose bounty and beneficence have, as you know, preferred me to the valuable rectory of this parish, where it shall be my earnest endeavour to demean myself with grateful respect towards her ladyship, and be ever ready to perform those rites and ceremonies which are instituted by the Church of England. It is as a clergyman that I feel it my duty to warn you against the sinful game of cards exhibited in the scene of the Prince's ball. If it had been family whist, I could have excused it, for there can be little harm in whist, at least among players who are not in such circumstances as to make five shillings any object. But the Baroness Beauxchamps is manifestly engaged in a game of sheer chance, if not of downright cheating. The admission of this incident to your stage cannot but have proceeded, you must allow me to tell you, from a faulty degree of indulgence. And I am to add, on the high authority of Lady Catherine, probably the highest on this as on many other subjects, that there is no instance on record of the *paniers* once worn by ladies being used as card-tables. With respectful compliments to your lady and family,

"I remain, dear sir, your cousin,

"WILLIAM COLLINS."

MR. PICKWICK AT THE PLAY

"And now," said Mr. Pickwick, looking round on his friends with a good-humoured smile, and a sparkle in the eye which no spectacles could dim or conceal, "the question is, Where shall we go to-night?"

With the faithful Sam in attendance behind his chair, he was seated at the head of his own table, with Mr. Snodgrass on his left and Mr. Winkle on his right and Mr. Alfred Jingle opposite him; his face was rosy with jollity, for they had just dispatched a hearty meal of chops and tomato sauce, with bottled ale and Madeira, and a special allowance of milk punch for the host.

Mr. Jingle proposed Mr. Pickwick; and Mr. Pickwick proposed Mr. Jingle. Mr. Snodgrass proposed Mr. Winkle; and Mr. Winkle proposed Mr. Snodgrass; while Sam, taking a deep pull at the stone bottle of milk punch behind his master's chair, silently proposed himself.

"And where," said Mr. Pickwick, "shall we go to-night?" Mr. Snodgrass, as modest as all great geniuses are, was silent. Mr. Winkle, who had been thinking of Arabella, started violently, looked

knowing, and was beginning to stammer something, when he was interrupted by Mr. Jingle—" A musical comedy, old boy—no plot—fine women—gags—go by-by—wake up for chorus—entertaining, very."

" And lyrics," said Mr. Snodgrass, with poetic rapture.

" I was just going to suggest it," said Mr. Winkle, " when this individual " (scowling at Mr. Jingle, who laid his hand on his heart, with a derisive smile), " when, I repeat, this individual interrupted me."

" A musical comedy, with all my heart," said Mr. Pickwick. " Sam, give me the paper. H'm, h'm, what's this ? *The Eclipse*, a farce with songs—will that do ? "

" But is a farce with songs a musical comedy ? " objected Mr. Winkle.

" Bless my soul," said Mr. Pickwick, " this is very puzzling."

" Beggin' your pardon, sir," said Sam, touching his forelock, " it's a distinction without a difference —as the pork pieman remarked when they asked him if his pork wasn't kittens."

" Then," said Mr. Pickwick, with a benevolent twinkle, " by all means let us go to *The Eclipse*."

" Beg pardon, sir," said Sam again, doubtfully, " there ain't no astrongomies in it, is there ? " Sam had not forgotten his adventure with the scientific gentleman at Clifton. But, as nobody knew, they

set off for the Garrick Theatre, and were soon ensconced in a box.

They found the stage occupied by a waiter, who was the very image of the waiter Mr. Pickwick had seen at the Old Royal Hotel at Birmingham, except that he didn't imperceptibly melt away. Waiters, in general, never walk or run; they have a peculiar and mysterious power of skimming out of rooms which other mortals possess not. But this waiter, unlike his kind, couldn't "get off" anyhow. He explained that it was because the composer had given him no music to "get off" with.

"Poor fellow," said Mr. Pickwick, greatly distressed; "will he have to stop there all night?"

"Not," muttered Sam to himself, "if I wos behind 'im with a bradawl."

However, the waiter did at last get off, and then came on again and sang another verse, amid loud hoorays, until Mr. Pickwick's eyes were wet with gratification at the universal jollity.

"Fine fellow, fine fellow," cried Mr. Pickwick; "what is his name?"

"Hush-h-h, my dear sir," whispered a charming young man of not much more than fifty in the next box, in whom Mr. Pickwick, abashed, recognized Mr. Angelo Cyrus Bantam, "*that* is Mr. Alfred Lester."

"A born waiter," interjected Mr. Jingle, "once a waiter always a waiter—stage custom—Medes and Persians—wears his napkin for a nightcap—droll fellow, very."

By and by there was much talk of a mysterious Tubby Haig, and they even sang a song about him ; but he did not appear on the stage, and Mr. Pickwick, whose curiosity was excited, asked who this Tubby Haig was.

Sam guessed he might be own brother to Mr. Wardle's Fat Boy, Joe, or perhaps " the old gen'l'm'n as wore the pigtail—reg'lar fat man, as hadn't caught a glimpse of his own shoes for five-and-forty year," but Mr. Bantam again leaned over from his box and whispered :—

" Hush-h-h, my dear sir, nobody is fat or old in Ba-a——I mean in literary circles. Mr. Tubby Haig is a popular author of detective stories, much prized, along with alleytors and commoneys, by the youth of this town."

But a sudden start of Mr. Winkle's and a rapturous exclamation from Mr. Snodgrass again directed Mr. Pickwick's attention to the scene. He almost fainted with dismay. Standing in the middle of the stage, in the full glare of the lights, was a lady with her shoulders and back (which she kept turning to the lights) bare to the waist !

" Bless my soul," cried Mr. Pickwick, shrinking behind the curtain of the box, " what a dreadful thing ! "

He mustered up courage, and looked out again. The lady was still there, not a bit discomposed.

" Most extraordinary female, this," thought Mr. Pickwick, popping in again.

She still remained, however, and even threw an arch glance in Mr. Pickwick's direction, as much as to say, "You old dear."

"But—but—" cried Mr. Pickwick, in an agony, "won't she catch cold?"

"Bless your heart, no, sir," said Sam, "she's quite used to it, and it's done with the very best intentions, as the gen'l'man said ven he run away from his wife, 'cos she seemed unhappy with him."

If Mr. Pickwick was distressed, very different was the effect of the lovely vision upon Mr. Winkle. Alas for the weakness of human nature! he forgot for the moment all about Arabella. Suddenly grasping his hat, he rose from his seat, said "Good-night, my dear sir," to Mr. Pickwick between his set teeth, added brokenly, "My friend, my benefactor, my honoured companion, do not judge me harshly"—and dashed out of the box.

"Very extraordinary," said Mr. Pickwick to himself, "what *can* that young man be going to do?"

Meanwhile, for Mr. Winkle to rush downstairs, into the street, round the corner, as far as the stage-door, was the work of a moment. Taking out a card engraved "NATHANIEL WINKLE, M.P.C.," he hastily pencilled a few fervent words on it and handed it to the doorkeeper, requiring him instantly to convey it to Miss Teddie Gerard.

"What now, imperence," said the man, roughly pushing him from the door and knocking his hat over his eyes.

At the same moment Mr. Winkle found his arms pinioned from behind by Sam Weller, who led him, crestfallen, back into the street and his senses. The public were now leaving the theatre, and Mr. Pickwick, beckoning Mr. Winkle to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low, but distinct and emphatic, tone these remarkable words :—

" You're a humbug, sir."

" A what ! " said Mr. Winkle, starting.

" A humbug, sir."

With these words, Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel, and rejoined his friends.

MR. CRICHTON AND MR. LITTIMER

THEY were seated together, Mr. and Mrs. Crichton, in the bar-parlour of their little public-house in the Harrow Road, at the more fashionable end, for which Mr. Crichton had himself invented the sign (in memory of his past experiences) of "The Case is Altered." Mr. Crichton, too, was altered and yet the same. He wore one of the Earl's old smoking-jackets, with a coronet still embroidered on the breast pocket—not, he said, out of anything so vulgar as ostentation, but as a sort of last link with the Upper House—but his patent leather boots had given place to carpet slippers, and his trousers, once so impeccable, were now baggy at the knees. Altogether he was an easier, more relaxed Crichton, freed as he was from the restraining, if respectful, criticism of the servants' hall. Indeed, Miss Fisher, who had always hated him, hinted that he had become slightly Rabelaisian—a reference which she owed to mademoiselle—though she would not have dared to repeat the hint to Mrs. Crichton (*née* Tweeny). For marriage had in no degree abated Tweeny's reverence for her Crichton, or rather, as old habit still impelled her to call him, her Guv.

The Guv. was at this moment comforting himself with a glass of port (from the wood) and thinking of that bin of '47 he had helped the Earl to finish in past days. And now he was inhabiting a road where (at least at the other, the unfashionable, end) port was invariably "port wine." Such are the vicissitudes of human affairs. Tweeny herself was guilty of the solecism, as was perhaps to be expected from a lady who, for her own drinking, preferred swipes. Though she had made great strides in her education under the Guv.'s guidance (she was now nearly into quadratic equations, and could say the dates of accession of the kings of England down to James II.), she still made sad havoc of her nominatives and verbs in the heat of conversation.

"A gent as wants to see the Guv.," said the potboy, popping his head in at the bar-parlour door—the potboy, for Tweeny knew better than to have a barmaid about the place for the Guv. to cast a favourable eye on.

A not very clean card was handed in, inscribed :—

"Mr. Littimer,"

and the owner walked in after it. Or, rather, glided softly in, shutting the door after entry as delicately as though the inmates had just fallen into a sweet sleep on which their life depended. Mr. Littimer was an old-fashioned looking man, with mutton-chop whiskers, a "stock," tied in a large bow, a long frock-coat, and tight trousers—the whole suggesting nothing of recent or even

modern date, but, say, 1850. It was an appearance of intense respectability, of super-respectability, of that 1850 respectability which was so infinitely more respectable than any respectability of our own day. Mr. Crichton stared, as well he might, and washed his hands with invisible soap. Though, in fact, now middle-aged, he felt in this man's presence extremely young. He clean forgot that he had been a King in Babylon. Indeed, for the first time in his life he, the consummate, the magisterial, the admirable Crichton, felt almost green.

"Mr. Crichton, sir," said the visitor, with an apologetic inclination of the head, "I have ventured to take the great liberty of calling upon you, if you please, sir, and," he added with another inclination of the head to Mrs. Crichton (who felt what she would herself have called flabbergasted), "if *you* please, ma'am, as an old friend of your worthy father. He was butler at Mrs. Steerforth's when I valeted poor Mr. James." His eye fell, respectably, on Mr. Crichton's port. "Ah!" he said, "*his* wine was Madeira, but——" A second glass of port was thereupon placed on the table, and he sipped it respectably.

Mr. Crichton could only stare, speechless. All his *aplomb* had gone. He gazed at a ship's bucket, his most cherished island relic, which hung from the ceiling (as a shade for the electric light—one of his little mechanical ingenuities), and wondered whether he ever *could* have put anybody's head in it. His

philosophy was, for once, at fault. He knew, none better, that "nature" had made us all unequal, dividing us up into earls and butlers and tweenies, but now for the first time it dawned upon him that "nature" had made us unequally respectable. Here was something more respectable, vastly more respectable, than himself; respectable not in the grand but in the sublime manner.

He could not guess his visitor's thoughts, and it was well for his peace of mind that he could not. For Mr. Littimer's thoughts were, respectably, paternal. He thought of Mr. Crichton, sen., and still more of the senior Mrs. Crichton, once "own woman" to Mrs. Steerforth. Ah! those old days and those old loves! How sad and bad and mad it was—for Mr. Littimer's poet was Browning, as his host's was Henley, as suited the difference in their dates—and how they had deceived old Crichton between them! So this was *his* boy, his, Littimer's, though no one knew it save himself and the dead woman! And as he gazed, with respectable fondness, at this image, modernized, modified, subdued, of his own respectability, he reflected that there was something in heredity, after all. And he smiled, respectably, as he remembered his boy's opinion that the union of butler and lady's maid was perhaps the happiest of all combinations. Perhaps, yes; but without any perhaps, if the combination included the valet.

Unhappy, on the other hand, were those com-

binations from which valets were pointedly excluded. There was that outrageous young person whom Mr. James left behind at Naples and who turned upon him, the respectable Littimer, like a fury, when he was prepared to overlook her past in honourable marriage.

His meditations were interrupted by Mrs. Crichton, who had been mentally piecing together her recollections of "David Copperfield"—her Guv. had given her a Dickens course—and had now arrived at a conclusion. "Axin' yer pardon, mister," she said (being still, as we have stated, a little vulgar when excited), "but if you was valet to Mr. James Steerforth, you're the man as 'elped 'im to ruin that pore gal, and as afterwards went to quod for stealin'. I blushes"—here her eye fell on the Guv., who quietly dropped the correction "blush"—"I *blush* for yer, Mr. Littimer." "Ah, ma'am," Mr. Littimer respectably apologized, "I attribute my past follies entirely to having lived a thoughtless life in the service of young men; and to having allowed myself to be led by them into weaknesses, which I had not the strength to resist."

"And that, I venture to suggest, ma'am," he respectably continued, "is why your worthy husband has been so much more fortunate in the world than myself. We are both respectable, if I may say so, patterns of respectability" (Crichton coloured with gratification at this compliment from the Master), "and yet our respectability has brought us very

different fates. And why, if you please, ma'am? Because I have served the young, while he has served the old—for I believe, ma'am, the most noble the Earl of Loam is long past the meridian. Besides, ma'am, we Early Victorians had not your husband's educational advantages. There were no Board schools for me. Not that I'm complaining, ma'am. We could still teach the young 'uns a thing or two about respectability." And so with a proud humility (and an intuition that there was to be no more port) he took his leave, again shutting the door with the utmost delicacy. He was, in truth, well content. He had seen his boy. The sacred lamp of respectability was not out.

But Mr. Crichton sat in a maze, still washing his hands with invisible soap.

HENRY JAMES REPUDIATES "THE REPROBATE"

He had dropped, a little wearily, the poor dear man, into a seat at the shady end of the terrace, whither he had wended or, it came over him with a sense of the blest " irony " of vulgar misinterpretation, almost zig-zagged his way after lunch. For he had permitted himself the merest sip of the ducal Yquem or Brane Cantenac, or whatever—he knew too well, oh, *didn't* he ? after all these years of Scratchem house-parties, the dangerous convivialities one had better show for beautifully appreciating than freely partake of—but he had been unable, in his exposure as the author of established reputation, the celebrity of the hour, the " master," as chattering Lady Jemima *would* call him between the omelette and the chaudfroid, to " take cover " from the ducal dates. Well, the " All clear " was now sounded, but his head was still dizzy with the reverberating '87's and '90's and '96's and other such bombs of chronological precision that the host had dropped upon the guests as the butler filled their glasses. His subsequent consciousness was quite to cherish the view that

dates which went thus distressingly to one's head must somehow not be allowed to slip out of it again, but be turned into " copy " for readers who innocently look to their favourite romancers for connoisseurship in wines. What Lady Jemima had flung out at lunch was true, readers *are* a " rum lot," and, hang it all, who says art says sacrifice, readers were a necessary evil, the many-headed monster must be fed, and he'd be blest if he wouldn't feed it with dates, and show himself for, indulgently, richly, chronologically, " rum."

It marked, however, the feeling of the hour with him that this vision of future " bluffing " about vintages interfered not at all with the measure of his actual *malaise*. He still nervously fingered the telegram handed to him at lunch, and, when read, furtively crumpled into his pocket under Lady Jemima's celebrated nose. It was entirely odious to him, the crude purport of the message, as well as the hideous yellow ochre of its envelope. " Confidently expect you," the horrid thing ran, " to come and see your own play." This Stage Society, if that was its confounded name, was indeed of a confidence ! Yes, and of the last vulgarity ! His conscience was not void, but, on the contrary, quite charged and brimming with remembered lapses from the ideal life of letters—it was the hair-shirt he secretly wore even in the Scratchem world under the conventional garment which the Lady Jemimas of that world teased him by calling a

"boiled rag"—but the "expected," *that*, thank goodness, he had never been guilty of. Nay, was it not his "note," as the reviewers said, blithely and persistently to balk "expectation"? Had he not in every book of his successfully hugged his own mystery? Had not these same reviewers always missed his little point with a perfection exactly as admirable when they patted him on the back as when they kicked him on the shins? Did a single one of them ever discover "the figure in the carpet"? How many baffled readers hadn't written to him imploring him to divulge what *really* happened between Milly and Densher in that last meeting at Venice? Certainly he was in no chuckling mood under the smart of the telegram, but it seemed to him that he could almost have chuckled at the thought that he beautifully didn't know what happened in that Venetian meeting himself! And this impossible Stage Society, with that collective fatuity which seems always so much more gross than any individual sort, "confidently expected" him to come!

What was it, please, he put the question to himself with a heat which seemed to give even the shady end of the terrace the inconvenience of an exposure to full sun, they expected him to come *to*, or, still worse, for having probed the wound he must not flinch with the scalpel, to come *for*? Oh, no, he had not forgotten *The Reprobate*, and what angered him was that *they* hadn't, either. He had not for-

gotten a blessed one of the plays he had written for the country towns a score of years ago, when he had been bitten by the tarantula of the theatre, and, remembering them, he felt now viciously capable of biting the tarantula back. He had written them, God forgive him, for country towns. He positively shuddered when he found himself in a country town, to this day. The terrace at Scratchem notoriously commanded a distant prospect of at least three, in as many counties, with cathedrals, famous inns, theatres—the whole orthodox equipment, he summed it up vindictively in cheap journalese, of country towns. Vindictive, too, was his reflection that these objects of his old crazy solicitude must have been revolutionized in twenty years, their cathedrals "restored," their inns (the "A.B.C." vouched for it) "entirely refitted with electric light," their theatres turned into picture palaces. All the old associations of *The Reprobate* were extinct. It was monstrous that it should be entirely refitted with electric light.

And in the crude glare of that powerful illuminant, with every switch or whatever mercilessly turned—didn't they call it?—"on," he seemed to see the wretched thing, bare and hideous, with no cheap artifice of "make-up," no dab of rouge or streak of burnt cork, spared the dishonour of exposure. The crack in the golden bowl would be revealed, his awkward age would be brought up against him, what Maisie knew would be nothing to what every-

body would now know. His agony was not long purely mental; it suddenly became intercostal. A sharp point had dug him in the ribs. It was Lady Jemima's, it couldn't *not* be Lady Jemima's, pink parasol. Aware of the really great ease of really great ladies he forced a smile, as he rubbed his side. Ah, Olympians were unconventional indeed—that was a part of their high bravery and privilege.

"Dear Master," she began, and the phrase hurt him even more than the parasol, "won't you take poor little *me*?"

The great lady had read his telegram! Olympian unconventionality was of a licence!

"Yes," she archly beamed, "I looked over your shoulder at lunch, and——"

"And," he interruptingly wailed, "you know all."

"All," she nodded, "*tout le tremblement*, the whole caboodle. Now be an angel and take me."

"But, dear lady," he gloomed at her, "that's just it. The blest play is so naïvely, so vulgarly, beyond all redemption though not, thank Heaven, beyond my repudiation, caboodle."

"Oh, fiddlesticks," she playfully rejoined, and the artist in him registered for future use her rich Olympian vocabulary, "you *wrote* it, Master, anyhow. We've all been young once. Take me, and we'll both be young again," she gave it him straight, "together."

Ah, then the woman *was* dangerous. Scratchem

gossip had, for once, not overshot the mark. He would show her, all Olympian though she was, that giving it straight was a game two could play at.

"Dear lady," he said, "you're wonderful. But I won't take you. What's more, I'm not"—and he had it to himself surprisingly ready—"taking *any*."

M. BERGERET ON FILM CENSORING

A LATE October sun of unusual splendour lit up the windows of M. Paillot's bookshop, at the corner of the Place Saint-Exupère and the Rue des Tintelleries. But it was sombre in the back region of the shop where the second-hand book shelves were and M. Mazure, the departmental archivist, adjusted his spectacles to read his copy of *Le Phare*, with one eye on the newspaper and the other on M. Paillot and his customers. For M. Mazure wished not so much to read as to be seen reading, in order that he might be asked what the leading article was and reply, "Oh, a little thing of my own." But the question was not asked, for the only other *habitué* present was the Lecturer in Latin at the Faculty of Letters, who was sad and silent. M. Bergeret was turning over the new books and the old with a friendly hand, and though he never bought a book for fear of the outcries of his wife and three daughters he was on the best of terms with M. Paillot, who held him in high esteem as the reservoir and alembic of those humaner letters that are the livelihood and profit of booksellers. He took up Vol. XXXVIII. of "L'Histoire Générale des Voyages," which

always opened at the same place, p. 212, and he read :—

" ver un passage au nord. ' C'est à cet échec, dit-il, que nous devons n'avoir pu visiter les iles Sandwich et enrichir notre voyage d'une découverte qui . . .' "

For six years past the same page had presented itself to M. Bergeret, as an example of the monotony of life, as a symbol of the uniformity of daily tasks, and it saddened him.

At that moment M. de Terremondre, president of the Society of Agriculture and Archæology, entered the shop and greeted his friends with the slight air of superiority of a traveller over stay-at-homes. " I've just got back from England," he said, " and here, if either of you have enough English to read it, is to-day's *Times*."

M. Mazure hastily thrust *Le Phare* into his pocket and looked askance at the voluminous foreign journal, wherein he could claim no little thing of his own. M. Bergeret accepted it and applied himself as conscientiously to construing the text as though it were one of those books of the Æneid from which he was compiling his " Virgilius Nauticus." " The manners of our neighbours," he presently said, " are as usual more interesting to a student of human nature than their politics. I read that they are seriously concerned about the ethical teaching of their kinematography, and they have appointed a film censor the deputy T. P. O'Connor."

" I think I have heard speak of him over there," interrupted M. de Terremondre; " they call him, familiarly, Tépé."

" A mysterious name," said M. Bergeret, " but manifestly not abusive, and that of itself is a high honour. History records few nicknames that do not revile. And if the deputy O'Connor, or Tépé, can successfully acquit himself of his present functions he will be indeed an ornament to history, a saint of the Positivist Calendar, which is no doubt less glorious than the Roman, but more exclusive."

" Talking of Roman saints," broke in M. Mazure, " the Abbé Lantaigne has been spreading it abroad that you called Joan of Arc a mascot."

" By way of argument merely," said M. Bergeret, " not of epigram. The Abbé and I were discussing theology, about which I never permit myself to be facetious."

" But what of Tépé and his censorial functions ? " asked M. de Terremondre.

" They are extremely delicate," replied M. Bergeret, " and offer pitfalls to a censor with a velleity for nice distinctions. Thus I read that this one has already distinguished, and distinguished *con allegrezza*, between romantic crime and realistic crime, between murder in Mexico and murder in Mile End (which I take to be a suburb of London). He has distinguished between ' guilty love ' and ' the pursuit of lust.' He has distinguished between a lightly-clad lady swimming and the same lady at rest,

Surely a man gifted with so exquisite a discrimination is wasted in rude practical life. He should have been a metaphysician."

" Well, I," confessed M. de Terremondre, " am no metaphysician, and it seems to me murder is murder all the world over."

" Pardon me," said M. Bergeret, " but there, I think, your Tépé is quite right. Murder is murder all the world over if you are on the spot. But if you are at a sufficient distance from it in space or time, it may present itself as a thrilling adventure. Thus the Mexican film censor will be right in prohibiting films of murder in Mexico, and not wrong in admitting those of murder in Mile End. Where would tragedy be without murder ? We enjoy the murders of Julius Cæsar or of Duncan because they are remote ; they gratify the primeval passion for blood in us without a sense of risk. But we could not tolerate a play or a picture of yesterday's murder next door, because we think it might happen to ourselves. Remember that murder was long esteemed in our human societies as an energetic action, and in our manners and in our institutions there still subsist traces of this antique esteem. And that is why I approve the English film censor for treating with a wise indulgence one of the most venerable of our human admirations. He gratifies it under conditions of remoteness that deprive bloodshed of its reality while conserving its artistic verisimilitude."

" But, bless my soul," said M. de Terremondre

" how does the man distinguish between guilty love and lust ? "

" It is a fine point," said M. Bergeret. " The Fathers of the Church, the schoolmen, the Renaissance humanists, Descartes and Locke, Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, have all failed to make the distinction, and some of them have even confounded with the two what men to-day agree in calling innocent love. But is love ever innocent—unless it be that love Professor Bellac in Pailleron's play described as *l'amour psychique*, the love that Petrarch bore to Laura ? "

" If I remember aright," interposed M. Mazure, " someone else in the play remarked that Laura had eleven children."

Just then Mme. de Gromance passed across the Place. The conversation was suspended while all three men watched her into the patissier's opposite, elegantly hovering over the plates of cakes, and finally settling on a *baba au rhum*.

" Sapristi ! " exclaimed M. de Terremondre, " she's the prettiest woman in the whole place."

M. Bergeret mentally went over several passages in Æneid, Book IV., looked ruefully at his frayed shirt cuffs, and regretted the narrow life of a provincial university lecturer that reduced him to insignificance in the eyes of the prettiest woman in the place.

" Yes," he said with a sigh, " it is a very fine point. I wonder how on earth Tépé manages to settle it ? "

THE CHOCOLATE DRAMA

Civilization is a failure. That we all knew, even before the war, and indeed ever since the world first began to suffer from the intolerable nuisance of disobedient parents. But the latest and most fatal sign of decadence is the advent of a paradoxical Lord Chancellor. I read in a *Times* leader:—"When the Lord Chancellor ponderously observes in the House of Lords that the primary business of theatres 'is not to sell chocolates but to present the drama,' he is making a statement which is too absurd to analyse." *The Times*, I rejoice to see, is living up to its high traditions of intrepid and incisive utterance. I should not myself complain if the Lord Chancellor was merely ponderous. As the dying Heine observed, when someone wondered if Providence would pardon him, *c'est son métier.* What is so flagrant is the Lord Chancellor's ignorance of the commanding position acquired by chocolate in relation to the modern drama.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am not a *chocolatier.* I have no vested interest in either Menier or Marquis. But I am a frequenter of the playhouse, and live, therefore, in the odour of chocolate. I know that without chocolates our

womenkind could not endure our modern drama; and without womenkind the drama would cease to exist. The question is, therefore, of the deepest theatrical importance. I feel sure the British Drama League must have had a meeting about it. The advocates of a national theatre have probably considered it in committee. The two bodies (if they are not one and the same) should arrange an early deputation to the Food Controller.

Meanwhile the Lord Chancellor wantonly paradoxes. Evidently he is no playgoer. That is a trifle, and since the production of *Iolanthe* perhaps even (in the phrase of a famous criminal lawyer) "a amiable weakness." But, evidently also, he is not a chocolate eater, and that is serious. I suppose, after all, you are not allowed to eat chocolates on the Woolsack. But there is the Petty Bag. It would hold at least 2 lb. of best mixed. Why not turn it to a grateful and comforting purpose? The Great Seal, too, might be done in chocolate, and as I understand the Lord Chancellor must never part with it, day or night, he would have a perpetual source of nourishment. It is time that the symbols of office ceased to be useless ornaments. Stay! I believe I have stumbled incidentally on the secret of Lord Halsbury's splendid longevity. Ask Menier or Marquis.

But the present Chancellor has, clearly, missed his opportunities. Let him visit our theatres and there recognize the futility of his pretence that their primary business is to present drama. He will see

at once that what he put forward as a main business is in reality a mere parergon. Drama is presented, but only as an agreeable, not too obtrusive, accompaniment to the eating of chocolate. The curtain goes up, and the ladies in the audience, *distraites*, and manifestly feeling with Mrs. Gamp (or was it Betsy Prig ?) a sort of sinking, yawn through the first scene or two. Then there is a rustle of paper wrappings, little white cardboard boxes are brought out and passed from hand to hand, there is a dainty picking and choosing of round and square and triangular, with a knowing rejection of the hard-toffee-filled ones, and now the fair faces are all set in a fixed smile of contentment and the fair jaws are steadily, rhythmically at work. To an unprepared observer it cannot be a pretty sight. Fair Americans chewing gum are nothing to it. There are superfine male voluptuaries who do not much care to see women eat, even at the festive board. But to see scores of women simultaneously eating chocolates at the theatre is an uncanny thing. They do it in unison, and they do it with an air of furtive enjoyment, as though it were some secret vice and all the better for being sinful. The act-drop goes up and down, actors are heard talking or the orchestra playing, men pass out for a cigarette and repass, but the fair jaws never cease working. The habit of needlework, lace-making, and perhaps war knitting has given lovely woman that form of genius which has been defined as a long patience.

They eat chocolates with the monotonous regularity with which they hemstitch linen or darn socks. It has been said that women go to church for the sake of the *hims*, but they go to the theatre for the sake of chocolates. And the Lord Chancellor, good, easy man, says the primary business of the theatre is to present drama !

No, its primary business is to provide comfortable and amusing surroundings for fair chocolate-eaters. The play is there for the same reason the coon band is at a restaurant, to assist mastication. That is the real explanation of recent vicissitudes in the dramatic *genres*. Why has tragedy virtually disappeared from the stage ? Because it will go with neither *fondants* nor *pralinés*. Why the enormous vogue of revues ? Because they suit every kind of chocolate from 4*s*. to 6*s*. per lb. Why is Mr. George Robey so universal a favourite ? Because he creates the kind of laughter which never interferes with your munching. The true, if hitherto secret, history of the drama is a history of theatrical dietary. Why is the Restoration drama so widely different from the Victorian ? Because the first was an accompaniment to oranges and the second to pork-pies. We live now in a more refined age, the age of chocolate, and enjoy the drama that chocolate deserves. There has been what the vulgar call a " slump " in the theatrical world, and all sorts of far-fetched explanations have been offered, such as the dearth of good plays and the

dismissal of the " temporary " ladies from Government offices, with consequent loss of pocket-money for playgoing. The real cause is quite simple, as real causes always are. Chocolate has " gone up."

And that is the secret of all the agitation about the 8 o'clock rule. The purveyors know that, once in the theatre, ladies *must* eat chocolate, whatever its price. It is a necessity for them there, not a luxury, and after 8 p.m., when the imported supplies are running low, almost any price might be obtained for the staple article of food on the spot. But why, it may be asked, are the imported supplies, in present circumstances, insufficient for the whole evening's consumption ? Simply because the chocolates eaten by women are purchased by men, and men are *so* forgetful. Besides they have an absurd prejudice against bulging pockets. Clearly " Dora " ought gracefully to withdraw the 8 o'clock prohibition. It would not only be a kindness to those meritorious public servants, the chocolate vendors, but be also a great lift to the languishing drama. Ladies who have emptied their chocolate boxes are apt to become peevish—and then woe to the last act. With still another smooth round tablet to turn over on the tongue (especially if it is the delightful sort that has peppermint cream inside) the play might be followed to the very end with satisfaction, and even enthusiasm. The Lord Chancellor may ignore these facts, but they are well known to every serious student of the chocolate drama.

GROCK

THERE must be a philosophy of clowns. I would rather find it than look up their history, which is "older than any history that is written in any book," though the respectable compilers of Encyclopædias (I feel sure without looking) must often have written it in their books. I have, however, been reading Croce's history of Pulcinella, because that is history written by a philosopher. It is also a work of formidable erudition, disproving, among other things, the theory of the learned Dieterich that he was a survival from the stage of ancient Rome. No, he seems to have been invented by one Silvio Fiorillo, a Neapolitan actor who flourished "negli ultimi decenni del Cinquecento e nei primi del Seicento"—in fact, was a contemporary of an English actor, one William Shakespeare. Pulcinella, you know (transmogrified, and spoiled, for us as Punch), was a sort of clown, and it is interesting to learn that he was invented by an actor all out of his own head. But I for one should be vastly more interested to know who invented Grock. For Grock also is a sort of clown. Yet no; one must distinguish. There are clowns and there is Grock. For Grock happens to be an

artist, and the artist is always an individual. After all, as an individual artist, he must have invented himself.

It was a remarkably happy invention. You may see that for yourselves at the Coliseum, generally, though true clown-lovers follow it about all over the map wherever it is to be seen. Victor Hugo (and the theme would not have been unworthy of that lyre) would have described it in a series of antitheses. It is genial and *macabre*, owlishly stupid and Macchiavellianly astute, platypode and feather-light, cacophonous and divinely musical. Grock's first act is a practical antithesis. A strange creature with a very high and very bald cranium (you think of what Fitzgerald said of James Spedding's: "No wonder no hair can grow at such an altitude") and in very baggy breeches waddles in with an enormous portmanteau—which proves to contain a fiddle no larger than your hand. The creature looks more simian than human, but is graciously affable—another Sir Oran Haut-ton, in fact, with fiddle substituted for Sir Oran's flute and French horn.

But Sir Oran was dumb, whereas Grock has a voice which reverberates along the orchestra and seems almost to lift the roof. He uses it to counterfeit the deep notes of an imaginary double bass, which he balances himself on a chair to play, and he uses it to roar with contemptuous surprise at being asked if he can play the piano. But it is good-humoured contempt. Grock is an accommodating

monster, and at a mere hint from the violinist waddles off to change into evening clothes. In them he looks like a grotesque beetle. Then his antics at the piano! His chair being too far from the keyboard he makes great efforts to push the piano nearer. When it is pointed out that it would be easier to move the chair he beams with delight at the cleverness of the idea and expresses it in a peculiarly bland roar. Then he slides, in apparent absence of mind, all over the piano-case and, on finally deciding to play a tune, does it with his feet. Thereafter he thrusts his feet through the seat of the chair and proceeds to give a performance of extraordinary brilliance on the concertina. . . . But I am in despair, because I see that these tricks, which in action send one into convulsions of laughter, are not ludicrous, are not to be realized at all in narrative. It is the old difficulty of transposing the comic from three dimensions into two—and when the comic becomes the grotesque, and that extreme form of the grotesque which constitutes the clownesque, then the difficulty becomes sheer impossibility.

Why does this queer combination of anthropoid appearance, unearthly noises, physical agility, and musical talent—so flat in description—make one laugh so immoderately in actual presentation? Well, there is, first, the old idea of the parturient mountains and the ridiculous mouse. Of the many theories of the comic (all, according to Jean Paul Richter, themselves comic) the best known perhaps

is the theory of suddenly relaxed strain. Your psychic energies have been strained (say by Grock's huge portmanteau), and are suddenly in excess and let loose by an inadequate sequel (the tiny fiddle). Then there is the old theory of Aristotle, that the comic is ugliness without pain. That will account for your laughter at Grock's grotesque appearance, his baggy breeches, his beetle-like dress clothes, his hideous mouth giving utterance to harmless sentiments. Again, there is the pleasure arising from the discovery that an apparent idiot has wholly unexpected superiorities, acrobatic skill, and virtuosity in musical execution. But " not such a fool as he looks " is the class-badge of clowns in general. There is something still unexplained in the attraction of Grock. One can only call it his individuality —his benign, bland outlook on a cosmos of which he seems modestly to possess the secret hidden from ourselves. One comes in the end to the old helpless explanation of any individual artist. Grock pleases because he is Grock.

And now I think one can begin to see why literature (or if you think that too pretentious a word, say letterpress) fails to do justice to clowns. Other comic personages have their verbal jokes, which can be quoted in evidence, but the clown (certainly the clown of the Grock type) is a joke confined to appearance and action. His effects, too, are all of the simplest and broadest—the obvious things (obvious when he has invented them) which are the most

difficult of all to translate into prose. You see, I have been driven to depend on general epithets like grotesque, bland, *macabre*, which fit the man too loosely (like ready-made clothes cut to fit innumerable men) to give you his exact measure. My only consolation is that I have failed with the best. Grock, with all his erudition, all his nicety of analysis, has failed to realize Pulcinella for me. And that is where clowns may enjoy a secret, malign pleasure; they proudly confront a universe which delights in them but cannot describe them. A critic may say to an acrobat, for instance:—"I cannot swing on your trapeze, but I can understand you, while you cannot understand me." But Grock seems to understand everything (he could do no less, with that noble forehead), probably even critics, while they, poor souls, can only struggle helplessly with their inadequate adjectives, and give him up. But if he condescended to criticism, be sure he would not struggle helplessly. He would blandly thrust his feet through the seat of his chair, and then write his criticism with them. And (Grock is a Frenchman) it would be better than Sainte-Beuve.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM

Every critic or would-be critic has his own little theory of criticism, as every baby in *Utopia Limited* had its own ickle prospectus. This makes him an avid, but generally a recalcitrant, student of other people's theories. He is naturally anxious, that is, to learn what the other people think about what inevitably occupies so much of his own thoughts; at the same time, as he cannot but have formed his own theory after his own temperament, consciously or not, he must experience a certain discomfort when he encounters other theories based on temperaments alien from his own. You have, in fact, the converse of Stendhal's statement that every commendation from *confrère* to *confrère* is a certificate of resemblance; every sign of unlikeness provokes the opposite of commendation. So I took up with somewhat mixed feelings an important leading article in the *Literary Supplement* on "The Function of Criticism." Important because its subject is, as Henry James said once in a letter to Mrs. Humphry Ward, among "the highest speculations that can engage the human mind." (Oho! I should like to hear Mr. Bottles or any other *homme sensuel moyen* on *that!*) Well, after reading the article, I have the

profoundest respect for the writer, whoever he may be; he knows what he is talking about *au fond*, and can talk admirably about it. But then comes in that inevitable recalcitrancy. It seems to me that if the writer is right, then most art and criticism are on the wrong tack. Maybe they are—the writer evidently thinks they are—but one cannot accept that uncomfortable conclusion offhand, and so one cannot but ask oneself whether the writer *is* right, after all.

He is certainly wrong about Croce. The ideal critic, he says, " will not accept from Croce the thesis that all expression is art; for he knows that if expression means anything it is by no means all art." Now the very foundation-stone of the Crocean æsthetic is that art is the expression of intuitions; when you come to concepts, or the relations of intuitions, though the expression of them is art, the concepts themselves (what " expression means ") are not; you will have passed out of the region of art. Thus your historian, logician, or zoologist, say, has a style of his own; that side of him is art. But historical judgments, logic, or zoology are not. Croce discusses this distinction exhaustively, and, I should have thought, clearly. Yet here our leader-writer puts forward as a refutation of Croce a statement carefully made by Croce himself. But this is a detail which does not affect the writer's main position. I only mention it as one of the many misrepresentations of Croce which students of that

philosopher are, by this time, used to accepting as, apparently, inevitable.

Now, says the writer, the critic must have a philosophy and, what is more, a philosophy of a certain sort. That the critic must have a philosophy we should, I suppose, all agree; for the critic is a historian, and a historian without a theory of realities, a system of values, *i.e.*, a philosophy, has no basis for his judgments—he is merely a chronicler. (And a chronicler, let me say in passing, is precisely what I should call the writer's "historical critic"—who "essentially has no concern with the greater or less literary excellence of the objects whose history he traces—their existence is alone sufficient for him.") But what particular philosophy must the critic have? It must be, says the writer, "a humanistic philosophy. His inquiries must be modulated, and subject to an intimate, organic governance by an ideal of the good life." Beware of confusing this ideal of good life with mere conventional morality. Art is autonomous and therefore independent of that. No; "an ideal of the good life, if it is to have the internal coherence and the organic force of a true ideal, *must inevitably* be æsthetic. There is no other power than our æsthetic intuition by which we can imagine or conceive it; we can express it only in æsthetic terms." And so we get back to Plato and the Platonic ideas and, generally, to "the Greeks for the principles of art and criticism." "The secret" of the humanistic philosophy "lies in Aristotle."

But is not this attempt to distinguish between conventional morality and an ideal of the good life, æsthetically formed, rather specious ? At any rate, the world at large, for a good many centuries, has applauded, or discountenanced, Greek criticism as essentially moralistic—as importing into the region of æsthetics the standards of ordinary, conventional morality. That is, surely, a commonplace about Aristotle. His ideal tragic hero is to be neither saint nor utter villain, but a character between these two extremes. Further, he must be illustrious, like Œdipus or Thyestes (Poetics, ed. Butcher, XIII. 3). Again, tragedy is an imitation of persons who are above the common level (XV. 8). It seems to me that the standards applied here are those of our ordinary, or conventional, morality, and I am only confused by the introduction of the mysterious " ideal of the good life." It seems to me—that may be my stupidity—but it seemed so, also, to our forefathers, for it was this very moralism of Greek criticism that led men for so many centuries to demand " instruction " from art. And that is why it was such a feather in Dryden's cap (Dryden, of whom our leader-writer has a poor opinion, as a critic without a philosophy) to have said the memorable and decisive thing : " delight is the chief if not the only end of poesy ; instruction can be admitted but in the second place, for poesy only instructs as it delights."

This " ideal of good life " leads our leader-writer

far—away up into the clouds. Among the activities of the human spirit art takes "the place of sovereignty." It "is the manifestation of the ideal in human life." This attitude, of course, will not be altogether unfamiliar to students of æsthetics. Something not unlike it has been heard before from the "mystic" æstheticians of a century ago. It leaves me unconvinced. I cannot but think that that philosophy makes out a better case which assigns to art, as intuition-expression, not the "place of sovereignty" but the place of foundation in the human spirit; for which it is not flower nor fruit, but root. You see, Croce, like "cheerfulness" in Boswell's story of the other philosopher, will come "breaking in."

COTERIE CRITICISM

A YOUNG critic was recently so obliging as to send me the proof of an article in the hope that I might find something in it to interest me. I did, but not, I imagine, what was expected. The article discussed a modern author of European reputation, and incidentally compared his mind and his style with that of Mr. X., Mrs. Y., and Miss Z. These three, it appeared, were contemporary English novelists, and —here was the interesting thing to me in our young critic's article—I had never heard of one of them. They were evidently "intellectuals"—the whole tenor of the article showed that—the idols of some young and naturally solemn critical "school," familiar classics, I dare say, in Chelsea studios and Girton or Newnham rooms. One often wonders what these serious young people are reading, and here, it seemed, was a valuable light. They must be reading, at all events, Mr. X., and Mrs. Y., and Miss Z. Otherwise, our young critic would never have referred to them with such gravity and with so confident an assumption that his particular set of readers would know all about them. And yet the collocation of these three names, these coterie

classics, with that of the great European author, famous throughout the whole world of polite letters, struck one as infinitely grotesque. It showed so naïve a confusion of literary "values," so queer a sense of proportion and congruity. It was, in short, coterie criticism.

There seems to be a good deal of that about just now. One sees innumerable reviews of innumerable poets, which one supposes to be written by other poets, so solemnly do the writers take their topic and their author and themselves. And for the most part this writing bears the mark of "green, unknowing youth"—the bland assumption that literature was invented yesterday, and that, since the Armistice, we cannot but require a brand-new set of literary canons, estimates, and evaluations. Evidently our young warriors have come back from the front with their spirit of *camaraderie* still glowing within them. Well, youth will be served, and we must resign ourselves, with a helpless shrug, to a deluge of crude over-estimates, enthusiastic magnifications of the ephemeral, and solemn examinations of the novels of Mr. X., Mrs. Y., and Miss Z. And we must be prepared to see the old reputations going down like a row of ninepins. We shall have to make a polite affectation of listening to the young gentlemen who dismiss Meredith as "pretentious" and tell us that Hardy "can't write" and that Anatole France is *vieux jeu*. For if you are always adoring the new because it is new, then you may as

well make a complete thing of it by decrying the old because it is old. The breath you can spare from puffing the "Georgians" up you may as well use for puffing the "Victorians" out. And thus the world wags.

What is more, it is thus that the history of literature gets itself evolved. For it is time that I tried to see what good can be said of the coteries, as well as what ill, and this, I think, can be said for them—that they keep the ball rolling. It is they, with their foolish face of praise, who discover the new talents and begin the new movements. If you are always on the pounce for novelties you must occasionally "spot a winner" and find a novelty that the outer world ratifies into a permanency. The minor Elizabethan dramatists were once the darlings of a coterie, but Webster and one or two others still survive. The Lakists were once coterie poets, and, if Southey has petered out, Wordsworth remains. Of course they make awful "howlers." A coterie started the vogue of that terribly tiresome "Jean Christophe," of Romain Rolland, and where is it now? On the other hand, a coterie "discovered" Pater, and it was a real find; the world will not willingly let die "Marius" or the "Renaissance." Henry James began as the idol of a coterie, and "The Golden Bowl" is not yet broken. It may be—who knows?—that the novels of Mr. X., Mrs. Y., and Miss Z. will by and by range themselves proudly on our shelves alongside Fielding and Jane and Meredith and Hardy.

But while these young reputations are still to make in the great world, let us not, as Mrs. Gamp says, proticipate; let us keep our high estimate of them modestly to ourselves, and not stick them up on the classic shelf among the best bindings before their time. What makes it worse is that the coteries are apt to have no classic shelf. Their walls are lined and their boudoir tables littered with new books, and nothing but new books. Women are great offenders in this way, especially the women whom American journals call "Society Ladies"—who are accustomed, in the absence of contradiction and criticism and other correctives (tabooed as "bad form"), to mistake their wayward fancies for considered judgments. We want a modern Molière to write us another *Femmes Savantes*. (I present the idea to Mr. Bernard Shaw. They have dubbed him "the English Molière." Well, here's a chance for him to make good.) There is Lady Dulcibella. She is always recommending you a new book that nobody else has ever heard of. "Oh, how perfectly sweet of you to call on this horrid wet afternoon! *Have* you read 'Mes Larmes'? It's written by a Russian actress with such wonderful red hair, you can't think, and they say she was a princess, until those dreadful Bolshevists, you know. We met her at Florence in the winter, and everybody said she was just like one of the Botticellis in the Accademia. They *do* say that Guido da Verona—or D'Annunzio, or somebody (don't you think that horrid little

D'Annunzio is just like a frog ?)—was quite mad about her. But ' Mes Larmes ' is perfectly *sweet*, and don't forget to order it. Two lumps or three ? " And listen to the chatter of some of those wonderfully bedizened ladies who variegate, if they don't exactly decorate, the stalls of one of our Sunday coterie theatres. The queer books they rave about ! The odd Moldo-Wallachian or Syro-Phœnician dramatists they have discovered !

All this, it is only fair to remember, may leave our young critic inviolate. After all, he may belong to no coterie, or only to a coterie of one ; he may have sound critical reasons for the faith that is in him about Mr. X., and Mrs. Y., and Miss Z. And even if he does represent a coterie, he might, I suppose, find a fairly effective retort to some of my observations. " You talk of our love of novelties for novelty's sake. But you have admitted that, if we always go for the new, we must sometimes light on the true. What we really go for is life. The new is more lively than the old. The actual, the present, the world we are at this moment living in, has more to say to us in literature than the old dead world, the ' sixty years since ' of your classic Scott. The classic, as Stendhal said, is what pleased our grandfathers ; but I am out to please my grandfather's grandson. And our coteries, I dare say, are often kept together by the mere docility of mind, the imitative instinct, of their members. But is there not a good deal of mere docility among the old fogey

party, the people who reject the new because it is new and admire the old because it is old? Is not this mere imitative instinct at work also among the upholders of literary traditions and the approved classics? Absurdity for absurdity, the youthful coterie is no worse than the old fogey crowd." To put all straight I will now go and read the novels of Mr. X., Mrs. Y., and Miss Z.

CRITICISM AND CREATION

A PLAY of Dryden's has been successfully revived by the Phœnix Society. One or two others might be tried, but not many. For most of Dryden's plays, as the curious may satisfy themselves by reading them, are as dead as a doornail. They bore us in the reading, and would simply drive us out of the theatre. Some of Dryden's non-dramatic poems still permit themselves to be read, but the permission is rarely sought by modern readers, apart from candidates for some academic examination in English literature, who have no choice. Yet we all render him lip service as a great poet. How many are there to pay him proper homage as a great critic? For a great critic he was, and, moreover, our first dramatic critic in time as well as in importance. He discussed not the details of this or that play, but the fundamental principles of drama. He abounded in ideas, and expressed them with a conversational ease which, in his time, was an entirely new thing. But it would be impertinent to praise Dryden's prose style after Johnson's exhaustive eulogy and the delicate appreciations of Professor Ker. What I would point out is that all Dryden's critical work

can still be read with pleasure, while most of his dramatic work cannot be read at all. And the humour of it is that I shall at once be told the dramatic work was "creative," while the critical was not.

This distinction, an essentially false one, as I shall hope to show, is still a great favourite with our authors of fiction; they "create," their critics do not. Authors who write, in Flaubert's phrase, like *cochers de fiacre*, and who are particularly given to this contrast, it would be cruel to deprive of a comforting illusion; but authors of merit and repute also share it, and to them I would urge my modest plea for a reconsideration of the matter.

What does the dramatist, or writer of fiction in general, create? Actions and characters? Not so, for these are only created in real life, by the contending volitions of real men and the impact between their volitions and external reality. The author creates images of actions and characters, or, in other words, expresses his intuitions of life. When the intuition is vivid, when the image is a Falstaff, a Baron Hulot, a Don Quixote, a Colonel Newcome, we are apt to think of it as a real person. And they are, in truth, as real to us as anybody in the actual world whom we have never met but only know of. For the historic person, unmet, is, just like the imaginary person, only a bundle for us of our intuitions. Julius Cæsar was a real person, but we can only know of him, as we know of Mr. Pickwick,

by hearsay. These vivid intuitions are what your author likes to call "creations." So they are. That is the magic of art.

And because, to the vast majority of men, their intuitions (in the case of actual reality encountered, their perceptions) of other men and their actions are their most interesting experience, art is allowed without challenge to arrogate to itself this quality of "creation." There is a biographical dictionary of Balzac's personages—some 2,000, if I remember rightly—of whom a few are actual historical people. But, in fact, you make no distinction. The one set are as real to you as the others. In this way the *Comédie Humaine* does, as its author said, compete with the *État Civil*. There are few ideas, speculations, judgments in Balzac that are worth a rap; when he tried abstract thought he was apt to achieve nonsense. But very few readers want abstract thought. They want "to know people," "to see people." Balzac makes "people," tells you all about their families, their incomes, their loves and hates, "splendours and miseries," their struggles, their orgies, their squalor, their death. That is "creative" art. Let us admire it. Let us revel in it. Let us be profoundly thankful for it.

But when, as so frequently happens, one hears some fourteenth-rate yarn-spinner, who also makes "people," but people who were not worth making, people who are puppets or the mere phantoms of a greensick brain—when one hears this gentleman

claiming kinship with Balzac or with my friend the distinguished novelist and real artist already mentioned, as a " creator " one is inclined to smile. " Creation " is a blessed word. But the thing created may be quite valueless.

And so it is, precisely, with criticism. For criticism is also " creative." But it does not create images of people or their lives ; it creates thought, ideas, concepts. That is, it builds up something new out of the artist's intuitions and exhibits the relations between them. Here, in the conceptual world, we are in a different region from the intuitional world of the artist. Those who care to enter it, who feel at home in it, are comparatively few ; the absence of personal interest, of " people," makes it seem cold to the average, gregarious man. " People " are a natural, ideas an acquired, taste. But the one set are just as much a " creation " as the other. And in the one set just as in the other the thing created may not be worth creating. Ideas, expositions, illustrations in criticism have a distressing habit of being as poor and conventional and mechanical as many a novelist's or playwright's characters and life histories. There is not a pin to choose between them. For as the one thing that matters in art is the artist behind it, so the critic behind it is the one thing that matters in criticism.

These are elementary commonplaces. But they need restating from time to time. For the average man, with all his interest in life fixed on " people,"

is always falling into the error that the novelist or playwright makes something, while the critic makes nothing. And your fourteenth-rate author, sharing the temperament of the average man, falls into the same error and seems, indeed, inordinately proud of it. He seems to say : " Why, you, good master critic, couldn't even begin to do what I, the ' creative ' artist, do " ; and he would probably be surprised by the answer that it is the critic's very critical faculty, his endowment of judgment and taste, which makes the writing of bad plays or novels impossible, because repugnant to him. It is precisely because the critical faculty is so rare a thing that so many bad novels and plays get themselves written.

But enough of these sharp distinctions between the " creation " of images and the " creation " of concepts ! Is not a union of the two, like the union of butler and lady's-maid, as described by Mr. Crichton, " the happiest of all combinations " ? Who does not feel how immensely the mere story part of " Tom Jones " gains by the critical chapter introductions ? And, on the other hand, how the mere critical part of Dryden's " Essay of Dramatic Poesy " gains by the little touches of story, from the opening moment when " they ordered the watermen to let fall their oars more gently " to the close at Somerset Stairs, where " they went up through a crowd of French people, who were merrily dancing in the open air " ?

ACTING AND CRITICISM

A VETERAN who has been regaling the readers of *The Times* with his recollections of the London stage has dropped by the way a remark on modern theatrical criticism. For it, he says, "the play is everything, and the leading actor or actress has often to be content with a few lines." Dean Gaisford began a sermon, "Saint Paul says, and I partly agree with him." I partly agree with the veteran. Criticism has occasionally to deal with plays that cannot be "everything" for it. There are new plays that are merely a vehicle for the art of the actor, who must then get more than a few lines. There are old plays revived to show a new actor in a classic part, and the part is then greater than the whole. This, I think, accounts for "the space devoted to the acting in London criticisms at the time Henry Irving rose to fame." Either he appeared in new plays of little intrinsic merit, like *The Bells*, or else in classic parts of melodrama (made classic by Frédéric Lemaître) or of Shakespeare. In these conditions criticism must always gravitate towards the acting. It did so, long before Irving's time, with Hazlitt over Edmund Kean. It

has done so, since Irving's time, over Sarah and Duse, and must do so again over every new Shylock or Millamant or Sir Peter.

But these conditions are exceptional, and it is well for the drama that they are. For the vitality of the drama primarily depends not upon the talent of its interpreters but on that of its creators, and a new image or new transposition of life in a form appropriate to the theatre is more important than the perfection of the human instrument by which it is " made flesh." If criticism, then, has of late years and on the whole been able to devote more attention to the play than to the playing, I suggest to our veteran that the fact is a healthy sign for our drama. It shows that there have been plays to criticise and that criticism has done its duty.

But that, I hasten to add, is its luck rather than its merit. One must not ride the high ethical horse, and I should be sorry to suggest that good criticism is ever written from a sense of duty, any more than a good play or any other piece of good literature. Good criticism is written just because the critic feels like that—and bad, it may be added, generally because the critic has been trying to write something which he supposes other people will feel like. The good critic writes with his temperament—and here is a reason why, in the long run, plays will interest him more than players. For are we not all agreed about the first principle of criticism ? Is it not to put yourself in the place of the artist criticized, to

adopt his point of view, to recreate his work within yourself? Well, the critic can put himself in the place of the playwright much more readily than into that of the actor. The playwright and he are working in different ways, with much the same material, ideas, and images, or, if you like, concepts and intuitions mainly expressed in words—which is only a long way of saying that they are both authors. And they have in common the literary temperament. Now the literary temperament and the histrionic are two very different things.

The actor, as his very name imports, is an active man, a man of action. At his quietest, he perambulates the stage. But violent physical exercise is a part of his trade. He fights single combats, jumps into open graves, plunges into lakes, is swallowed down in quicksands, sharpens knives on the sole of his boot, deftly catches jewel caskets thrown from upper windows, wrestles with heavy-weight champions, knouts or is knouted, stabs or is stabbed, rolls headlong down staircases, writhes in the agonies of poison, and is (or at any rate in the good old days was) kicked, pinched, and pummelled out of the limelight by the "star." And all this under the handicap of grease-paint and a wig! It must be very fatiguing. But then he enjoys the physical advantages of an active life. He has Sir Willoughby Patterne's leg (under trousers that never bag at the knee, and terminating in boots of the shiniest patent leather), and all the rest to match. As becomes a

man of action, he is no reader. I have heard the late Mr. Henry Neville declare that an actor should never be allowed to look at a book. This may seem to the rest of us a sad fate for him, but look at his compensations! He spends much, if not most, of his stage-life making love to pretty women, wives, widows, or *ingénues*. Frequently he kisses them, or seems to—for he will tell you, the rogue, that stage-kisses are always delivered in the air. Let us say then that he is often within an inch of kissing a pretty woman—which is already a considerable privilege. When he is not kissing her (or the air, as the case may be), he is sentimentally bidding her to a nunnery go or dying in picturesque agonies at her feet. Anyhow he goes through his work in the society and with the active co-operation of pretty women. And note, for it is an enormous advantage to him, that that work is a fixed, settled thing. His words have been invented for him and written out in advance. He has rehearsed his actions. He knows precisely what he is going to do.

Contrast with this alluring picture the temperament and working habits of the critic. He is a man, not of action, but of contemplation. His pursuit is sedentary, and with his life of forced inaction he risks becoming as fat as Mr. Gibbon, without the alleviation of the Gibbonian style. Personal advantages are not aids to composition, and he may be the ugliest man in London, like G. H. Lewes, whose dramatic criticisms, nevertheless, may still be read

with pleasure. His fingers are inky. His face is not " made up," but sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. No pretty women help him to write his criticisms. Indeed, if Helen of Troy herself, or Aphrodite new-risen from the sea came into his study he would cry out with writer's petulance (a far more prevalent and insidious disease than writer's cramp), " Oh, do please go away ! Can't you see I'm not yet through my second slip ? " (She will return when he is out, and " tidy up " his desk for him—a really fiendish revenge). Books, forbidden to the actor, are the critic's solace—and also his despair, because they have said all the good things and taken the bread out of his mouth. And, unlike the actor, he is working in the unknown. His head is filled with a chaos of half-formed ideas and the transient embarrassed phantoms of logical developments. Will he ever be able to sort them out and to give them at any rate a specious appearance of continuity ? Nay, can he foresee the beginning of his next sentence, or even finish this one ? Thus he is perpetually on the rack. " Luke's iron crown and Damien's bed of steel " are nothing to it. It is true that his criticism does, mysteriously, get itself completed—mysteriously, because he seems to have been no active agent in it, but a mere looker-on while it somehow wrote itself.

Is it surprising that it should generally write itself about the play (which, I daresay, writes itself, too, and with the same tormenting anxiety) rather than

about the playing, which proceeds from so different a temperament from the critic's and operates in conditions so alien from his? But, let me add for the comfort of our veteran, there are critics and critics. If some of us displease him by too often sparing only a few lines for the leading actor or actress, there will always be plenty of others who are more interested in persons than in ideas and images, who care less for transpositions of life than for Sarah's golden voice and Duse's limp, and "Quin's high plume and Oldfield's petticoat." These will redress the balance.

ACTING AS ART

NOTHING could be more characteristically English than the circumstances which gave rise the other day to the singular question, "Is acting an art?" There was a practical issue, whether the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art was or was not entitled to exemption under an Act of 1843 from the payment of rates. Sir John Simon argued it, of course, as a practical question. He dealt with custom and precedent and authority, dictionary definitions and judicial decisions. He had to keep one eye on æsthetics and the other on the rates. This is our traditional English way. We "drive at practice." Nevertheless, this question whether acting is an art is really one of pure æsthetics, and is in no way affected by any decision of the Appeal Committee of the London County Council.

You cannot answer it until you have made up your mind what you mean by art. Sir John Simon seems to have suggested that art was something "primarily directed to the satisfaction of the æsthetic sense." But is there any such thing as a special "æsthetic sense"? Is it anything more than a name for our spiritual reaction to a work of

art, our response to it in mind and feeling? And are we not arguing in a circle when we say that art is what provokes the response to art? Perhaps it might amuse, perhaps it might irritate, perhaps it might simply bewilder the Appeal Committee of the London County Council to tell them that art is the expression of intuitions. They might reply that they cannot find intuitions in the rate-book, and that the Act of 1843 is silent about them. Yet this is what art is, and you have to bear it in mind when you ask, "Is the actor an artist?" Art is a spiritual activity, and the artist's expression of his intuitions (the painter's "vision," the actor's "conception" of his part) is internal; when he wishes to externalize his expression, to communicate it to others, he has to use certain media—paint and canvas, marble and brick, musical notes, words and gestures. But it is the spiritual activity, the intuition-expression, that makes the artist. The medium is no part of his definition.

And yet, I suggest, it is the peculiarity of the actor's medium that has often withheld from him, at any rate with unthinking people, his title to rank as an artist. He is his own medium, his own paint and canvas, his own brick and marble. The works of other artists, the picture, the poem, the sonata, have an independent life, they survive their authors; the actor's works are inseparable from his actual presence, and die with him. Hence a certain difficulty for the unsophisticated in

distinguishing the artist from what the philosophers call the empirical man ; the Edmund Kean whose genius is illuminating and revitalizing Shylock from the Edmund Kean who is notoriously fond of the bottle and who has lately got into trouble with an alderman's wife. The physique, the temperament, of the empirical man furnish the medium for the artist. He arrives at the theatre in a taxi, or his own Rolls-Royce, smoking a big cigar, every inch of him a man of to-day ; the next moment he is pretending to be an old mad King of Britain. This confusion is behind Johnson's " fellow who claps a hump on his back and calls himself Richard the Third." It leaves out of account the imaginative side of him, the artist. Johnson might just as well have dismissed Shakespeare as a " fellow who supposed a hump clapped on the back of one of his fancies, which he calls Richard the Third." Lamb raised another objection, that the bodily presence of the actor materialized, coarsened, the finer elements of the part—hid from sight " the lofty genius, the man of vast capacity, the profound, the witty, accomplished Richard." The medium, in other words, is a hindrance to the art, not so much a medium as a nuisance.

These are the objections of ignorance or of whim. Certainly the peculiarity of his medium imposes peculiar restrictions on the actor. If the painter lacks a certain pigment he can get it at the colourman's. If the composer needs a certain *timbre* he

can add the necessary instrument to his orchestra. All the quarries are open to the architect. But no "make up" box will furnish a resonant voice to a shrill-piped actor or make Garrick six feet high. An actress may be at the height of her powers, and yet too old to play Juliet. Sir Henry Irving's physical oddities went far to ruin some of his impersonations. But these limitations of the medium do not affect the actor's status as an artist. They only restrict the range in which he may exercise his art.

And can it be gainsaid that what he exercises is true art, a spiritual activity, the expression of his intuitions? People, comparing his work with the "creations" of the playwright, are apt to speak of him as a mere "interpreter." He has his words given him, they say, and his significant acts prescribed for him in advance. The truth is, "creation" and "interpretation" are figurative terms; it would be quite reasonable to interchange them. Shakespeare "interprets" life by giving form to it, by piecing together, say, certain scraps of actual observation along with the image of his fancy into the character of Falstaff. With the printed words and stage-directions as data, the actor re-imagines Falstaff, brings his own temperament and feelings and sympathetic vision to the service of Shakespeare's indications, and "creates" the living, moving man. True, the processes are at different stages, and may be of different importance. Shakespeare has intuited and expressed life, the actor has

intuited and expressed Shakespeare. But both expressions are art.

And note that while Shakespeare "created" Falstaff, no playgoer has ever seen or ever will see Shakespeare's Falstaff. For the image formed in Shakespeare's mind has always on the stage to be translated for us in terms of other minds which can never be identical with his—is, in fact, "re-created" by each actor in turn. It is the actor who converts the "cold print" of the text into vivid, concrete life. Life! that is the secret of the actor's "following," a much more notable fact in the world of the theatre than the "following" of this or that playwright. The actor, like all who, in Buffon's phrase, "*parlent au corps par le corps*," expresses a temperament, a personality, himself; imposes himself on his part and on us. People "follow" a favourite actor in all his impersonations because his art gives them more pleasure than the playwright's, or because his art must be added to the playwright's before they will care about that.

When I say "people" I don't mean "littery gents." The typical playgoer prefers life to literature. He is as a rule no great reader. Nor are the actors. There has always been a certain coolness between the men of letters and the actors—their temperaments are so opposed. I have quoted from Lamb. Anatole France said much the same thing of the Comédie Française—"*Leur personne efface l'œuvre qu'ils représentent.*" Views like these merely

express a preference for one art over another. They do not contest the actor's right to rank as an artist. That, to speak rigorously, is a rank held by many people " for the duration "—*i.e.*, while and whenever they express their intuitions. But it would be impolitic to insist on this strict view. The rate-payers' list might be seriously affected and much uneasiness occasioned to the Appeal Committee of the London County Council.

AUDIENCES

Audiences may be divided into first-nighters, second-nighters, and general playgoers. All audiences are important, but first-nighters most of all. Without them the acted drama would not begin to exist. For obvious reasons, I have nothing but good to say of them. I wish to live at peace with my neighbours. And I do not believe the malicious story told about a manager, now dead, that he liked to fill the second row of his stalls on first-nights with his superannuated sweethearts. Nobody is fat or old in Ba-ath, and there are no superannuitants among first-nighters.

I find, from Mr. Max Beerbohm's entirely delightful book "Seven Men," that it is possible to get tired of first-nighters. I should never have guessed it myself. But this is what he says :—"I was dramatic critic for the *Saturday Review*, and, weary of meeting the same lot of people over and over again at first nights, had recently sent a circular to the managers, asking that I might have seats for second nights instead." But mark what follows :—"I found that there existed as distinct and invariable a lot of second-nighters as of first-nighters. The

second-nighters were less ' showy ' ; but then, they came more to see than to be seen, and there was an air that I liked of earnestness and hopefulness about them. I used to write a good deal about the future of the British drama, and they, for their part, used to think and talk a great deal about it. Though second-nighters do come to see, they remain rather to hope and pray." Because I have quoted I must not be understood as accepting Mr. Beerbohm's implied aspersion on first-nighters. It is all very well for him. He has retired (the more's the pity) from dramatic criticism. But I take his account of second-nighters on trust, because the exigencies of a daily newspaper prevent me from observing them for myself. Evidently they, no more than first-nighters, are average playgoers.

Not that I would disparage the general playgoer. Indeed, I am not sure that he is not, in another sense than Labiche's, *le plus heureux des trois*. I can speak for myself. Mind, I am saying nothing against first-nighters. They are entirely admirable persons—I could never bring myself, like Mr. Beerbohm, to call them a lot. But oh ! the joy of being, on holiday occasions, a general playgoer, of throwing one's considering cap over the mills, of garnering no impressions for future " copy," of blithely ignoring one's better judgment, of going comfortably home from the play, like everybody else, instead of dashing madly into a taxi for the newspaper office ! The play will be well on in its run, the comedian will have

polished up his jokes, the superfluities will have been cut out, the programme girls will long since have given up leading the applause, you won't know a soul, and you won't even bother to look at the author's name. You surrender your individuality and drift with the crowd, or, in more pretentious language, merge yourself in the collective consciousness.

Which reminds me. The general playgoer just because he is general, is what Henry James called George Sand: remarkably accessible. Everybody knows him. He is a public theme. Theorists won't leave him alone. In particular, the collective psychologists have marked him for their prey. For them he typifies the theatrical "crowd," with the peculiar crowd characteristics these theorists profess to have scientifically classified. Sarcey began it. Lemaître followed. And comparatively obscure scribes have devoted attention to the general playgoer. They have said that he is no philosopher; he cannot adopt a detached, impersonal, disinterested view of life; he must take sides. Hence the convention of the "sympathetic personage." He has not the judicial faculty, is not accustomed to sift evidence or to estimate probabilities. Hence the convention of the "long arm of coincidence" and the convention that the wildest improbability may be taken as the starting-point of a play. The general playgoer, as such, is virtuous and generous; for we are all on our best behaviour in public. And he

insists upon a strict separation of virtue and vice. He wants his personages all of a piece. The composite characters, blends of good and evil, he refuses to recognize. Hence the conventions of "hero" and "villain," of "poetic justice" and of "living happy ever afterwards." Further, it has been suggested that a crowd of general playgoers, having an individuality of its own, cannot but be interested in that individuality, apart from all reference to the cause which brought it together. Once assembled, it becomes self-conscious, self-assertive. It finds itself an interesting spectacle. And the general playgoer is not of the cloistered but of the gregarious type of mankind; he must have bustle, the sense of human kinship brought home to him by sitting elbow by elbow with his neighbours. The faculty of intellectual attention is seldom high in such a temperament as this. Hence the playwright has to *force* the attention of a temperamentally inattentive audience. Mark, once more, that I am not speaking of first-nighters. Their individuality is too strong to be crowd-immersed. I would not for worlds speak of them as a crowd at all. They are an assemblage, a constellation, a galaxy. Admirable persons!

But there is one thing for which I envy the general playgoer above all. I mean his freedom and pungency of criticism. Anonymity gives him irresponsibility, and, his resentment at being bored not being subject to the cooling process of literary

composition, his language is apt to be really terrible. Talk of printed criticism! Actors and authors do talk of it often enough, and on the whole don't seem to like it; but let them mingle with the general playgoer and keep their ears open! Who was the man in Balzac who said that it was absurd to speak of the danger of certain books when we all had the corrupt book of the world open before us, and beyond that another book a thousand times more dangerous—all that is whispered by one man to another or discussed behind ladies' fans at balls? So the general playgoer is the great purveyor of secret criticism. Disraeli, or another, said that the secret history of the world, which never got into the history books, was the only true history. Let us hope that secret criticism is not the only true sort, but it is certainly the most live. It is free from the literary bias, the cant of criticism, the smell of the lamp. And it is the most potent of persuasives. Published criticism is powerless against it. The fate of a play is not decided by newspaper criticisms (thank goodness! I should be miserable if it were), but by what the general playgoers say to one another and pass on to their friends. How many plays with "record" runs have been dismissed by the newspapers on the morrow of the first night with faint praise or positive dispraise? The general playgoer has said his say, and what he says "goes." I know he is giving many worthy people just now much uneasiness. They form little theatrical societies *à*

côté to keep him out. They deplore his taste and organize leagues for his education and improvement. I rather fancy he is like the young lady in the play who " didn't want to have her mind improved." But that is another story. What I have been envying him for is not his taste but the heartiness with which he " abounds in his own sense " and his freedom in expressing it. After all, perhaps criticism that is so free and so pervasive and so potent is not exactly to be called " secret." I seek the *mot juste*. Or I would if that were not a back-number. Has not Mr. Beerbohm finally put it in its place as the Holy Grail of the nineties ?

FIRST NIGHTS

THERE is a movement, I am told, in certain critical circles in favour of the system which obtains in Parisian theatres of the *répétition générale*. This, as most playgoers know, is a final "dress rehearsal" held on the evening (at the Français, where evening performances must be continuous, on the afternoon) of the day before the actual "first night" production, or *première*, of the play. The seats, including the exceptionally large number allotted in Paris to the Press, are filled by invitation. It is the real "first night"; only there is no "money" in the house. Notoriously, there is a formidable cohort of Parisians who regard their seat at a *répétition générale* as a kind of vested interest, and who would be affronted by having to put up with the *première*. A very remarkable public this is, the public of the *répétition générale*, with its members virtually all known to one another, filling the *foyer* with chatter and much scent, and patiently sitting through a performance which is apt to begin a good half-hour after the advertised time, and to end in the small hours of the morning. The inter-acts are of inordinate length, perhaps in the interests of

the buffet, more likely because of the inveterate leisureliness of the Parisians. The whole thing, at any rate as I have found it, is a weariness to English flesh. But then the gentlemen (and ladies) of the Press have the advantage of being able to go home straight to bed, and of having all next day to think over their "notices."

That is the reason, I suppose, why some critics would like to see the system introduced in London. They want more time. They want to sleep on it. They would write, they think, better in the morning. Let me leave that point, however, for the moment to turn to what an incorrigibly commercial world will probably think a more important one, the question of finance. To the theatrical manager the introduction of this system would mean the loss of a whole night's receipts. With theatre rents and expenses at their present height, could they possibly contemplate so heavy a sacrifice? They are already complaining that theatre seats at their present prices do not pay—and here they would be giving away, for one night, the whole house. Further, however they might gratify the friends whom they invited, nothing could save them from the wrath of those who were left over. Some of these, perhaps, might be mollified by a subsequent invitation—for the "deadhead" habit becomes an insidious disease, and, I am told, the Paris theatres groan under the hordes of playgoers who consider themselves entitled to gratuitous admission. On the whole, I think our

managers would be ill-advised to countenance the suggested change.

Another thing. The *répétition générale* is a trial performance. Effects which don't "tell," incidents which shock or provoke ridicule, are often cut out next morning, so that the play actually presented at the *première* differs, sometimes vitally, from that presented to the critics, so that the "notice" not seldom describes and criticizes various matters which the public are never shown. If the English manager imitated this example—and as a practical man of business he would be sure to imitate it—the unhappy critic after writing his notice would have to go to the play again, before printing it, in order to assure himself that it still represented the facts. It would have to be two bites at a cherry. Now, new plays are often produced on two nights running, in which case two bites at the same cherry would be impossible. In the most favourable case, two successive visits to a play would be a heavy addition to the burden of life.

But would criticism benefit in quality? I venture to doubt that, too. I think that theatrical "notices" are all the better for being piping hot. One's impressions of the play are stronger, more definite in outline, richer in colour, when one leaves the theatre than next morning, when they have had time to cool and to fade into "second thoughts," which in criticism are far from being always the best. When Jules Lemaître went from the *Débats* to the

Deux Mondes he found that his thoughts about the play, instead of maturing with the longer interval for writing, were apt to become simply vague and general. If the play happened to be one " of ideas," not so much harm was done, because ideas stick in the mind, and are revolved there. But a play of emotion or a play dependent on fine shades of acting is bound to suffer by the gradual waning of the first impression. And my own experience is that in writing about a play of which one has lost the first hot impression, and which one has to recall by an effort of memory, the proportions get altered, so that the criticism is thrown out of gear. Some point, a mere minor point, perhaps, that attracted one's attention, remains in the mind and assumes an undue importance in relation to other details that have faded. I went to see *Grierson's Way* revived the other night after a quarter of a century. When I asked myself beforehand what I remembered of it, I could only answer that I had been originally much struck by its merits, but that the only one of these merits that remained in my mind was a conversation wherein, under a surface of small talk, two people were revealing depths of tragic emotion. I had forgotten the characters, the *motif*, the very story. And when my conversation turned up (in Act III.), though I was as delighted as ever, I saw, of course, that it was only an item, not the sole memorable thing in the play.

An interval of a quarter of a century is rather

different from one of four-and-twenty hours ? Undoubtedly ; but my point is that one's impressions begin to wane and to alter in " values " from the very outset. After all it is the business of critics not merely to criticize, analyse, and judge a play, to try and " place " it in the realm of art ; they have also the perhaps minor but still important duty of acting as public " tasters." They have to represent facts, to give the public a reasonably accurate notion of what they are likely to see. And they are in a much better position for doing this if they set down their facts and their views of the facts at once, while they are still quivering with the excitement (or yawning with the boredom) of them.

PLAYS WITHIN PLAYS

Representative arts will represent everything they can, including themselves. The theatre likes to show an image of its own life, life behind the scenes, actors acting on the stage, audiences listening, applauding, or interrupting in front. Hence the plays within plays which Shakespeare found so alluring. It was a comparatively simple problem of technique in his time because of the simplicity of the "platform" stage and of the Elizabethan playhouse.

A standing audience, as his for the most part was, is obviously easier to represent than a seated audience; it is just a crowd of "citizens" like any other stage crowd. The only important question for the stage-manager was the relative position of the mimic players and the mimic public. Clearly your mimic players must be seen by the real public, or what becomes of your play within a play? The position of your mimic public must have been more or less dependent on their importance in the action. But, I take it, the Elizabethan arrangement, in any case, must have been of a pre-Raphaelite symmetry. I presume the play scene in *Hamlet* must have taken

place in the lower part of the permanent erection at the back of the stage and that the mimic public was ranged down each side of the stage. The old arrangement has remained essentially unaltered. The mimic players are generally shown in some raised, arcaded terrace at the back of the stage ; the King and Queen face Hamlet and Ophelia (in profile with respect to the real public) in front. It would obviously never do to let Hamlet and the King face the performers in the rear and so turn their backs on the real public, for the whole point of the scene is the effect of the mimic play on the King and on Hamlet watching the King. But I do not, for my part, see why more might not be made out of this " psychologic " effect by an arrangement which placed the mimic players nearer the front of the actual stage, on one side, so that the King might be turned full-face towards us as he watched them. If the King were played by an actor of the first importance (which he seldom or never is), with a gift of facial play, we may be sure that this would be done.

There is a somewhat similar scene in the first act of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The chief centre of attraction here is not the mimic play itself, but the behaviour of the audience, disturbed by Cyrano's interruption of the players. That is why I think that Coquelin's arrangement with the players on one side and the audience in profile was better than Mr. Loraine's, with the players in the rear and the mimic audience turning its back to the real one. But it is a

point of comparative insignificance. As it was the old playhouse and the old standing audience that was being represented, the stage-management was essentially as simple as that of the play-scene in *Hamlet.*

So soon, however, as you come to represent the very different modern "picture" stage and the modern seated audience you see at once that the problem becomes immensely more difficult. Accordingly you find a revolution in the method of treating a play within a play. I do not know whether the Guitrys invented it or Reinhardt or whoever, but certainly the most conspicuous illustration we have had of it has been presented by the Guitrys. It is something much more than a mechanical change; it is psychological as well. The mimic stage, the stage of the play within the play, now occupies the whole of the actual stage, and the mimic audience is identified with the real audience.

We saw this startling innovation first in *Pasteur.* Pasteur is supposed to be addressing a meeting of the French Academy of Medicine. His rostrum is at the footlights, and he addresses *us,* the real audience. *We* have to suppose ourselves the Academy of Medicine. To help us to this illusion one or two actors are scattered about the house, who interrupt, argue with Pasteur, and are personally answered by him. We find ourselves, in fact, at once listening to a debate, as real audience, and, in the thick of it, taking part in it, as supposed audience.

There is a French proverb which says you cannot both join in a procession and look out of the window ; but this experience upsets it. The result is a curious blend of sensations ; you feel yourself both spectator and actor, *at* a play and *in* a play. But there is no doubt that the effect is much more vivid and exciting than that which would have attended the mere spectacle of Pasteur addressing a crowd upon the stage itself. You have, by the way, exactly the same effect in Mr. Galsworthy's *Skin Game*, where an auctioneer addresses us, the public, who are supposed to represent the competing purchasers.

A still more striking instance has been seen in *L'Illusioniste*. Here the first act shows the stage of a music-hall and presents three actual "turns." We, the actual audience, become the music-hall audience, and again there are actors scattered among us to help the illusion. They are addressed by the conjurer and answer him ; a lady in a box throws him ardent glances which are returned with interest. But one of the "turns," an act by acrobatic clowns, has absolutely nothing to do with the play ; it is there purely for its own interest, a substantive performance. This shows, what we knew before, that revolutions run to excess. We are so engrossed by the clowns that we are tempted to forget what we are there for, to see a play. Anyhow, it is a most amusing innovation, this conversion of the actual stage into an imaginary stage within the play, and of the actual public into an imaginary public taking

part in the play. It is a real enrichment of stage resources.

But there are obvious dangers. One I have just pointed out, the danger of introducing irrelevancies for their own intrinsic interest, which tend to impair the artistic unity of the play. Another is the danger of applying this method to cases (as in *Hamlet* and *Cyrano*) where the real centre of interest is not the mimic play but the mimic audience. Imagine the whole stage given up to the *Mouse Trap*, with the front row of stalls occupied by the courtiers, and Hamlet and Ophelia in one box watching the King and Gertrude in the opposite box! That is an extreme instance, which traditional respect for Shakespeare will probably save us from; but some ambitious producer will probably try this game with some modern play, and then I predict disaster.

PLAYS OF TALK

The production on two successive nights of two plays so violently contrasted in method as Mr. Harwood's *Grain of Mustard Seed* and Mr. Galsworthy's *Skin Game*—the first a play mainly of talk, the second a play entirely of action—sets one thinking. According to the orthodox canons, the second is the right, nay, the only method. Drama, we are told, is a conflict of wills and all the interest is in the action, the external manifestation of the conflict. There should be just enough talk to carry that on and not an idle word should be spoken. Diderot, indeed, professed to think that words were almost superfluous, and went to the play with cotton-wool in his ears in order to judge its merits on the dumb show; yet he wrote the most wordy and tedious plays. And there is, or was, a certain school of theatrical criticism which forever quotes the old Astley maxim, "Cut the cackle and come to the 'osses"—which was no doubt a most appropriate maxim, for quadrupeds. Others have mistaken action for physical, preferably violent action—Maldonado sweeping the crockery off the chimney-piece or Lady Audley pushing her husband down

the well—and have ignored the fact that talk also may be action, " and much the noblest," as Dryden says. " Every alteration or crossing of a design, every new-sprung passion, and turn of it, is a part of the action, and much the noblest, except we perceive nothing to be action, till they come to blows ; as if the painting of the hero's mind were not more properly the poet's work than the strength of his body." How often we were told in the old days that Dumas *fils* and Ibsen were too " talky," when their talk was mainly psychological action.

But this demand for action and nothing but action, so persistently uttered of late years, would deprive the world of much of its best entertainment. Apply it to Congreve, " cut the cackle " of his plays, and you come to the 'osses, spavined hacks, of plots childishly complicated and perfunctorily wound up. Would any one of taste suppress the " cackle " of Sheridan's scandalous college ? Is not, in short, much of the pleasure of comedy in resting from the action, in getting away from it, in the relief of good talk ? Yes, and often enough the pleasure of tragedy, too. There is a bustling, melodramatic action in *Hamlet*. But with what relief Hamlet gets away from his revenge " mission " at every moment, puts it out of sight, forgets it ! His interview with the players and advice to them on histrionics, his chat with the gravedigger, what else are these but the sheer delight of good talk ? For him the joy

of living is the joy of talking, and with the chance of these before him his revenge-mission may go hang!

Obviously we never get so near Shakespeare and Shakespeare's natural temperament, as in these moments of talk for its own sake, talk unfettered by the exigencies of the plot. For that talk wells up spontaneously and is not turned on to order; the poet has something interesting in his mind which he is bursting to say, and if to say it will keep the plot waiting, why, so much the worse for the plot. And here is a reason, I think, in favour of plays of talk. We get nearer the author in them; in good talk the author is expressing a pleasure so strong as to override the objection of irrelevance, and in sharing that pleasure we get the best of him, the spontaneous element in him, the man himself. On the other hand, mere yarn-spinning, mere plot-weaving, may be an almost mechanical exercise. Not necessarily, of course. I should be sorry to call Mr. Galsworthy's *Skin Game* a mechanical bit of work. The will-conflict there has an intense reality and is fought tooth and nail. Irrelevant talk in such a white-hot play would obviously be fatal. Everybody speaks briefly, plainly, and to the point. Artistic work of any kind gives pleasure, and it is possible to be as delighted with Mr. Galsworthy's kind as with Mr. Harwood's. I am not comparing two artists of two different kinds, which would be absurd. I am only pleading for a kind which is not

what a vain people supposeth, and which is apt to be stupidly condemned.

Not that it would be fair, either, to call Mr. Harwood's brilliant task irrelevant. It helps to paint character. Thus, parents expect their son to have returned from the war a compound of Sir Galahad and Mr. Bottomley, and instead of that he is only a good bridge-player, after four hours' bridge a day for four years. These witticisms help to tell you something about the young man whose family reputation gives rise to them in the family circle. When the old Parliamentary hand compares government to 'bus-driving, seeking to get through the traffic with the minimum of accident, or remarks on the reputation Canute would have made had he only waited for high tide, he is telling us something about himself and his political principles. But primarily these things are enjoyable for their wit and not for their relevance. In a play of fierce will-conflict they would have been impossible. These plays of brilliant talk belong to the quiet *genre*, and quiet in the theatre, as in art generally, is perhaps an acquired taste. "Punch," we are constantly being told by the natural unsophisticated man, is what is wanted—the word itself is the invention of an unquiet people. Well, give me wit, and let who will have the "punch."

The occasional tendency in the theatre to revolt against the restraint of the action and to play lightly round it has its counterpart in criticism. What is it gives so peculiar a charm to the criticism of

Dryden? Is it not his discursiveness, his little descriptive embellishments—as, for example, in the "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," the river trip, the listening for the distant thunder of the Dutch guns "on that memorable day," the moonlight on the water, the landing at Somerset Stairs among the crowd of French dancers? I have elsewhere said how Hazlitt's theatrical criticisms lose in readableness by their strict attention to business, compared with his miscellaneous essays, where he permits himself to wander "all over the place." George Henry Lewes's theatrical criticisms can still be read with pleasure for the very reason that they were diversified with deliberate, almost frivolous irrelevancies. And then there was Jules Lemaître with his perpetual "moi," which provoked the austere Brunetière to quote Pascal's "*le moi est haïssable.*" Yet where will you find more enjoyable criticism than Lemaître's? But I must keep off Lemaître and the charm of him, or I shall become, what he never was, tiresome. Even as it is, I may resemble the parson who said he had aimed at brevity in order to avoid tediousness, and was answered, "You *were* brief, and you *were* tedious."

"THE BEGGAR'S OPERA"

One of Boswell's projected works was a history of the controversy over *The Beggar's Opera.* The best known of the works he actually did write contains several references to this controversy. Reynolds said it afforded a proof how strangely people will differ in opinion about a literary performance. Burke thought it had no merit. Johnson thought very much the opposite, but said characteristically, "There is in it such a labefactation of all principles as may be injurious to morality." Gibbon suggested that it might refine the manners of highwaymen, "making them less ferocious, more polite—in short, more like gentlemen." It is noteworthy that the work was half a century old when these observations were made about it. It had become a classic. And later generations treated it as a classic—that is to say, kept on refashioning it to the taste of their own time. The version, for instance, that Hazlitt was so fond of writing about (in the second decade of the last century) was a sad mangling of the original. Even so, it represented for Hazlitt the high-water mark of theatrical enjoyment, just as the original did for Boswell, who said, "No performance which

the theatre exhibits delights me more." You cannot take up a volume of Swift's correspondence, or Horace Walpole's or Arbuthnot's, without mention of *The Beggar's Opera.* It even got into Grimm. It was the *H.M.S. Pinafore* of the time.

And that reminds me. As I sat at the Hammersmith Lyric listening to the dialogue between Peachum and Mrs. Peachum on the question whether Polly was Macheath's wife or his mistress, the thing seemed strangely modern, and not only modern, but Gilbertian. (I am speaking, of course, of the tone, not of the sentiment—Gilbert was a very Victorian of propriety.) Peachum is Gilbertian. "Do you think your mother and I should have liv'd comfortably so long together if ever we had been married? Baggage!" Mrs. Peachum is Gilbertian. "If you must be married, could you introduce nobody into our family but a highwayman? Why, thou foolish jade, thou wilt be as ill-used and as much neglected as if thou hadst married a lord!" Again, "If she had only an intrigue with the fellow, why the very best families have excus'd and huddled up a frailty of that sort. 'Tis marriage, husband, that makes it a blemish." Once more. "Love him! Worse and worse! I thought the girl had been better bred." Polly herself is Gilbertian. "Methinks I see him already in the cart, sweeter and more lovely than the nosegay in his hand! I hear the crowd extolling his resolution and intrepidity! What volleys of sighs are sent from the windows of

Holborn, that so comely a youth should be brought to disgrace! I see him at the tree! The whole circle are in tears! Even butchers weep!" Lucy is Gilbertian. When Macheath is at the "tree," her comment is, "There is nothing moves one so much as a great man in distress." And not only the tone, but the very principle of the play is Gilbertian. Gilbert took some typical figure of the social hierarchy—a Lord Chancellor, a First Lord of the Admiralty—and set the Chancellor capering and the First Lord singing about the handle of the big front door. He put a familiar figure in unfamiliar postures. Gay took a typical figure of his own time—the highwayman—and showed him, not at work on the highway, but enjoying an elegant leisure, behaving like a Chesterfield or one of Congreve's fine gentlemen. It was the realism, the actuality of the subject, combined with the burlesque of the treatment, that delighted the London of 1728 as it delighted the London of a century and a half later. At each date it was a new experiment in opera libretto. Boswell specified the attraction of Gay's realism—"the real pictures of London life." Johnson singles out the "novelty" of the treatment.

But it is time that I said something about Mr. Nigel Playfair's revival. This is a remarkable success, from every point of view. For the original attraction of realism is, of course, no longer there. We have to take it all historically. And the revival has been particularly careful of historical accuracy.

Just as Gay's dialogue prompts you to say " Gilbert," so Mr. Lovat Fraser's scenery and costumes prompt you to exclaim " Hogarth ! " By the way, on one of Hazlitt's visits he records the exclamation of an old gentleman in the pit, after the scuffle between Peachum and Lockit, " Hogarth, by G—d ! " This was, no doubt, a tribute to the grim, ugly squalor of that particular scene. But the whole *décor* and atmosphere of the present affair are Hogarthian—the stiff, flattened hoops of the women, the tatterdemalion aspect of Macheath's rabble, Peachum's dressing-gown (which I suppose is " documentary "), Macheath's scarlet coat and flowing wig. And the dresses are accurately simple. The women wear plain stuffs ; Polly alone is allowed a little finery. Indeed, there is an almost austere simplicity about the whole affair. One scene, with just the alteration of a few accessories, serves for Peachum's house, for a tavern, and for Newgate. There is an orchestra of five strings, a flute, an oboe, and a harpsichord. It seems to me that their playing has the delicate charm of chamber music rather than the power and colour of orchestral—but I must not stray out of my province.

Hazlitt indulged in raptures over Miss Stephens, the first Polly he heard, and never failed to contrast with her her less pleasing successors. He had evidently lost his heart to her—a somewhat susceptible heart, if you think of the " Liber Amoris." I have no Miss Stephens to compare Miss Arkandy

with, and can only say the songstress is quite sweet enough for my taste and the actress a charming little doll. Miss Marquesita, the Lucy, is a good contrast, a voluptuous termagant. Boswell says of Walker, the original Macheath, that he "acquired great celebrity by his grave yet animated performance of it." Mr. Ranalow's Macheath is decidedly more grave than animated, is in fact a little solemn —long before he gets to the Condemn'd Hold. There is an almost Oriental impassiveness about him, something of the jaded sultan—which, after all, is not an inappropriate suggestion, surrounded as the poor man is by his seraglio of town-ladies. Miss Elsie French bravely makes a thorough hag of Mrs. Peachum; the Peachum and Lockit of Mr. Wynne and Mr. Rawson are properly, Hogarthianly, crapulous; and Mr. Scott Russell makes a good, vociferous Filch, leading with a will the fine drinking-song "Woman and Wine" and the still finer "Let us take the Road" (to the tune of Handel's march in *Rinaldo*). Altogether a delicious entertainment: gay, despite the solemn deportment of Macheath, and dainty, despite the sordid *crapule* of Newgate. Yes, my final impression of the affair is one of daintiness. Even the women of the town are dainty. They might almost be Dresden china shepherdesses (which would be bearing out the original suggestion of a Newgate "pastoral" very literally). For the sordid *milieu* is so remote from us as to have become fantastically unreal; the

Peachums and the Lockits are no longer ugly men, but have been turned into grotesque gargoyles; the rabble round Tyburn Tree has lived to see a Russian ballet and learnt to move in its elegant arabesques. It is a Hogarth retouched by a Shepperson—or rather, to speak by the card, by a Lovat Fraser.

GRAND GUIGNOLISM

Dandin, the judge in Racine's comedy of *Les Plaideurs*, offers to amuse Isabelle by the spectacle of a little torturing. "Eh! Monsieur," exclaims Isabelle, "eh, Monsieur, peut on voir souffrir des malheureux?" and Dandin, in his reply, speaks for a by no means negligible proportion of the human race: "Bon! cela fait toujours passer une heure ou deux." Dandin was a Guignolite.

We all have our Guignolite moments, moments of Taine's "ferocious gorilla" surviving in civilized man, when we seek the spectacle of torture or physical suffering or violent death; but we are careful to æsthetize them, refine them into moments of poetry or art. The pleasure of tragedy is æsthetic. Nevertheless, tragedy involves violent death, and without that would be an idle tale. So Rousseau was not altogether wrong when he said we go to a tragedy for the pleasure of seeing others suffer, without suffering ourselves. Your true Guignolite simply prefers his tragedy "neat," without æsthetic dilution. But I think it is unfair to charge him, as he is so often charged, with a love of the horrible for its own sake. I think, rather, that he is moved, a little more actively than the rest of the world, by curiosity.

It is customary to talk of curiosity as though it were essentially ignoble. Children, women, and savages are said to have most of it. It accounts for "fortune-telling," prophetic almanacs, spiritualistic *séances* and other forms of alleged communication with the dead. But the truth is, curiosity, the desire to enlarge experience, is a highly valuable, or, rather, indispensable, human attribute. Without it there could be no science, no progress, and finally no human life at all. And you cannot restrict it. It must crave for all forms of experience. Some of us will be sweeping the heavens for new stars, and others will want to peep into Bluebeard's cupboard. More particularly we are curious to know what is already known to others. We desire to see with our own eyes what others have seen and reported to us. That is why so many people have gone to *Chu Chin Chow*. We wish to realize for ourselves, by the direct aid of our own senses, "What it's like." And the more difficult it is to see, the greater the secrecy, the intimacy, of its actual happening in life, the greater our curiosity to see a picture or other representation of it. Hence the vogue of stage bedroom scenes, newspaper portraits of "the victim" and "the place of the crime," and Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors.

I believe that is why "cela"—the horrible, the dreadful, the gruesome—"fait toujours passer une heure ou deux" for your Guignolite. It satisfies his curiosity about an experience which in real life it is

rare or difficult to obtain. For instance, they have been showing at the London Grand Guignol a representation of a criminal's last half-hour before execution. Time was when you could see that for yourself, follow the prisoner in the cart to Tyburn, and offer him nosegays or pots of beer. In that time, enjoying the real thing, you wanted no mimic representation of it. For stage purposes you only cared to have it fantasticated—as in *The Beggar's Opera*. To-day you cannot (unless you are a prison official or the hangman himself) enjoy the real thing; the Press is excluded; so you seek the next best thing, a realistic stage picture of it. "Realistic," I say. That is the merit of Mr. Reginald Berkeley's *Eight o'Clock*, wherein there is not a trace of staginess or imported sentiment. He gives you what you are looking for, the nearest substitute for the real thing. You are shown, as accurately as possible, "what it's like." You see how the warders behave, and how the chaplain and how the prisoner—with the result that you feel as though, for that terrible half-hour, you had been in Newgate yourself. You have gone through an experience which in actual life (let us hope) you will never have. Your curiosity has been satisfied.

And I think realism will have to be the mainstay of the Grand Guignol programmes. There is another "shocker" in the bill, *Private Room No. 6*, by a French author, M. de Lorde, which seemed to me not half so effective as the other because it was

largely tinged with romance. Here again was an attempt to gratify curiosity about an unusual experience. The incident was distinctly "private and confidential." How many of us have had the chance of seeing a fiercely-whiskered Muscovite kissing and biting a (conveniently *décolletée*) lady on the shoulder, subsequently swallowing a tumberful of kummel at a draught, and presently being strangled by the lady's glove? This, you may say, was realistic enough, but what made it romantic, theatrical, was the obviously artificial arrangement of the story, the "preparations," the conventional types. You knew at once you were in the theatre and being served with carefully calculated "thrills." That is to say, your curiosity was solely about what was going to happen next in the playwright's scheme—the common interest of every stage plot—which is a very different thing from curiosity about strange, rare, experiences in actual life. You felt that Mr. Berkeley had really shown you "what it's like." You felt that M. de Lorde had only shown you what his skill in theatrical invention was like.

And there, I suspect, we reach a limitation of Grand Guignolism. The art of drama at its best—shall we call it grand art, as distinguished from Grand Guignol art?—does not exist to gratify curiosity. The best drama does not provoke the spectator's curiosity about what is going to happen so much as excite in him a keen desire that a certain thing shall happen and then satisfy that desire to the full. The

Greek tragedians did not scruple to announce their plot in advance. Lessing, in his " Hamburg Dramaturgy," maintains that " the dramatic interest is all the stronger and keener the longer and more certainly we have been allowed to foresee everything," and adds, " So far am I from holding that the end ought to be hidden from the spectator that I don't think the enterprise would be a task beyond my strength were I to undertake a play of which the end should be announced in advance, from the very first scene." The truth is, in the fine art of drama we are seeking what we seek in every fine art—beauty, a new form and colouring to be given to the actions and emotions of the real world by the artist's imagination. But even on the lower plane of realism Grand Guignolism has ample scope. The one-act formula has a clear technical advantage in the single scene and strict coincidence of supposed with actual time, great helps both to unity of impression. (One counted the minutes in *Eight o'Clock* almost as anxiously as the condemned man did.) And it has the immense fun of theatrical experiment, of seeing how far you can go, what shocks the public can stand and what it can't, the joy of adventurously exploring the unknown and the *inédit*. Above all, if it is wise it will remember that (as I believe at any rate) its public does not yearn for the " shocking " incident merely as such, but as representing a rare experience, and it will look for some rarities that are not shocking.

A THEATRICAL FORECAST

Newspapers periodically publish their review of the past theatrical year. But it is always a sad thing to recall the past, especially the immediate past, which is too recent to be history and only old enough to be stale. Why not, then, let bygones be bygones and turn to the future, about which hope springs eternal, and which gives free scope to the imagination instead of imposing the tedious labour of research? What are our leading dramatists going to give us next year? The question might be treated in a matter-of-fact way by just going and asking them—and perhaps getting very disappointing answers. It seems more sportsmanlike to guess; besides, it leaves room for some piquant surprises when one is by and by confronted with the actual. These, then, are one or two guesses for next season.

It is long, too long, since London had a play from Sir Arthur Pinero. When he writes a play he gives you a play, not a symposium or a sermon or a piece of propagandism, but a dramatic action which interests you in its story, makes you wonder what is going to happen next, and takes care that something does happen, striking at the moment and worth

thinking about afterwards. His characters are presented in strong relief, there is always a dramatic conflict of wills, his women are never insipid, are sometimes deliciously perverse, and, if not past redemption (in which case they commit suicide), are "saved" by the nearest Anglican bishop or dean. His forthcoming play will ignore the Church and will deal with a household divided on the "spiritualistic" question. The husband, who suffers from mild shell-shock and saw the "angels of Mons," will have come back from the war a devoted follower of Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle. The wife (Miss Irene Vanbrugh) will be a pretty sceptic, adoring her husband, but impatient of his credulity and determined to "laugh him out" of it. An opportunity occurs. The young pair have been having a sarcastic scene (a fine opportunity for Miss Irene's merry ringing laugh) about the husband's bosom-friend Jack, whom he had left for dead on the field at Mons. The husband eagerly hopes to get into communication with Jack "on the other side." The wife only remembers, with twinges of conscience, certain love passages she had, before her marriage, with the said Jack, of which she has never told her husband. Now Jack is not dead, but on his way to his bosom-friend, when the wife meets him. She sees at once a chance of opening her husband's eyes. "We'll have a *séance*," she says to Jack; "you shall pretend to be your own spirit, and then suddenly reveal yourself as flesh and blood—and Tom will be

for ever cured of his foolishness." Jack agrees, but he also is suffering from shell-shock (two in one play ! you can imagine how clever the critics will be over this—it will have to be made clear that it was the same shell), forgets himself at the *séance*, and at sight of his old lady-love cries " Darling ! " ; then, horrified at his own misbehaviour, disappears, and the same night is either run over by a motor-car or tumbles into a canal. The wife's reputation is saved by another lady present, who takes the " darling ! " to herself. It is not yet settled whether this shall be a comic amorous dame, really self-deceived (say, Miss Lottie Venne), or a shrewd, kindly woman of the world (Miss Compton, for choice), who promptly sees how the land lies and sacrifices herself for her little married friend. In either case, the wife has to keep up the illusion that the voice came from " the other side," while the husband, though confirmed in his spiritualism, is secretly disgusted to discover that the spirits can be such " bad form." Thus the final situation is an ironic transmutation of the first. The divided pair are now united, the merry sceptic being frightened into simulating belief, while the believer ruefully finds belief without zest. Much will depend on the acting of this final situation. Miss Irene may safely be trusted to transfer her laugh adroitly to the wrong side of her mouth, but great subtlety will be required from the actor who has to convey the mixed joy and pain of a belief proved at once true and not worth having. It may, perhaps, count among Mr.

Henry Ainley's triumphs. Mr. Gerald du Maurier will play Jack the friend—another triumph, for even in his moment of breakdown he will still keep the sympathy of the audience.

Sir James Barrie has not yet exhausted the variations on his "enchantment" theme. After the enchanted wood of *Dear Brutus*, where people get a second chance in life, and the enchanted island of *Mary Rose*, where time stands still with you, he will with his next play sound enchanted bagpipes. These will be heard as a weird *obbligato*, whenever any one of the characters falls into insincerity, from *pp* (amiable taradiddle) to *ff* (thumping lie), and, while they are playing, the character will talk broad Scotch and sketch the postures of or, in extreme cases, wildly dance a Highland Reel. As the characters will be drawn exclusively from the Holland House set (the scene throughout will be one of the famous breakfasts), the extravagance of the compulsory fits of Caledonianism can be seen a mile off. The dismay of the poet Rogers (Mr. George Robey, specially engaged) at finding his best *méchancetés*, in his notoriously low voice, unexpectedly uttered in the broadest Scotch will only be equalled by the surprise of Sydney Smith at hearing his choicest witticisms in the same lingo. At one supreme moment the whole party will be joining in a Reel, led recalcitrantly but majestically by Lady H. Fashionable dames (a great opportunity for the costumier, and fabulous sums will be spent on the wardrobe)

will suddenly change from lisping " vastly amusing I declare ! " and rolled-collared *beaux* from murmuring " monstrous fine women, egad ! " to " aiblins," " hoots, mon," " hech, sirs," etc. The situation will ultimately be saved by a little Scottish maiden, in a plaid (Miss Hilda Trevelyan), who, being sincerity itself, will never speak anything but the purest English, and a baby in a box nailed against the wall, who will not speak at all. For the enchanted bagpipes a squad of pipe-majors of the Black Watch, splendid fellows in review order, will be kindly lent from the Edinburgh garrison.

Mr. Maugham has been to China, and has brought back a play which will aim at being as unlike *Mr. Wu* as possible. In fact, no Chinaman will figure in it—Mr. Maugham would never do anything so artistically vulgar as that—nor anything Chinese except a little porcelain curio of the best period. This will be sold by auction in a scene (it will be the talk of London) faithfully reproducing a celebrated establishment in King Street, St. James's, with Mr. Hawtrey and Miss Gladys Cooper as the rival bidders. It will serve, later, for chief *pièce justificative* in a divorce case between the same parties (with a really witty judge —for he will have the wit of Mr. Maugham—who will make a certain actual humorist on the Bench green with envy), and in the end will be broken by an excited counsel (played by the famous crockery-smashing artist from the music-halls).

Mr. Shaw—but no, it is impossible for Mr. Shaw

himself, let alone any one else, to guess beforehand what Mr. Shaw will do. Finally, it may be conjectured that the rank and file of our playwrights will write for us precisely the same plays they have written before, under new titles. It would be an agreeable innovation if they would keep the old titles and write new plays for them.

A THEORY OF BRUNETIÈRE

THERE is a theory of the late Ferdinand Brunetière about the periods of dramatic activity which the time we are now passing through ought to put to the test. Brunetière was an incorrigible generalizer, first because he was a Frenchman, and next because he was a born critic. Criticism without general ideas, without a substructure of principle and theory to build upon, is an idle thing, the mere expression of likes and dislikes, or else sheer verbiage. This French critic was always throwing theories at the drama, and some of them have stuck. Perhaps the soundest of them and the most lasting was his theory of the drama as the spectacle of the struggle of will against obstacles. There has been much controversy about it, there has been no difficulty in instancing cases which it fails to cover, but I venture to think that as a rough generalization it still holds good. I am not, however, concerned with that famous theory for the moment. I am thinking of another theory—a historical one. Brunetière asserted that every outburst of dramatic activity in a nation will be found to have followed close upon a great manifestation of national energy—Greek

tragedy, for instance, after the Persian War, Calderon and de Vega after the Spanish conquests in the New World, Shakespeare after the Armada, the French romantic drama after the Napoleonic campaigns. He might have added that the war of 1870 was followed by the best work of Dumas fils, by the Théâtre Libre, by Ibsen and Björnson, Hauptmann and Sudermann, and the Russo-Japanese War by the Moscow Art Theatre and Tchekhov.

I confess, then, my doubts about the soundness of this theory. Throughout the past history of any nation wars have been of so constant occurrence that it would be difficult not to find one preceding, by a fairly short term, any particular outburst of dramatic activity you like to fix upon. One is always *post* the other; it is not necessarily *propter*. And instances to the contrary will readily occur: periods of dramatic activity that were not immediately preceded by, but rather synchronized with, great manifestations of national energy; for instance, the period of Corneille, Racine, and Molière. And sometimes, when you look for your dramatic sequel to your national energizing, you only draw a blank. Did any outburst of dramatic production follow the American Civil War? The theory, in short, is "an easy one," relying on lucky coincidence and ignoring inconvenient exceptions.

In any case, we ought to be able now, if ever, to put it to the "acid test." The leading nations of the world have just fought the biggest of all their wars.

Has the promised sequel followed ? Is there any sign at home or abroad of a fresh outburst of dramatic energy ? In Germany they seem to be merely " carrying on," or tending to be a little more pornographic than usual. In Vienna they are still translating Mr. Shaw. No new dramatic masterpiece is reported from Italy, D'Annunzio being " otherwise engaged," Mr. Boffin. Paris is still producing its favourite little " spicinesses " or, for the high brows, translating Strindberg. (Outside the theatre the effect of the war on Paris seems not merely negative but stupefying. They have achieved Dadaism and, so I read in a recent *Literary Supplement*, a distaste for the works of M. Anatole France !) In America the drama is in no better case than before the war.

And what about London ? An absolutely unprecedented dearth of not merely good but of actable plays. People will give you other causes, mainly economic, for the theatrical " slump." They will tell you, truly enough, that playgoers have less money to spend, and that the cheaper " cinema " is diverting more and more money from the theatre. And yet, whenever the managers produce anything really worth seeing there is no lack of people to see it.

There is nothing, then, to discourage the aspiring dramatist. Only he won't aspire ! Or his aspiration is not backed by talent ! It seems as though the war, instead of stimulating dramatic energy, had repressed and chilled it. What on earth (if I may use a colloquialism condemned by Dr. Johnson) would

poor M. Brunetière have said if he had lived to see his pet theory thus falsified? Probably he would have invented a new one. He would have said that wars mustn't be *too* big to fit into a law devised only for usual sizes. Also he might have said, wait and see. The war is only just over; give your young dramatists a little breathing time. Shakespeare's plays didn't immediately follow the Armada. The French Romantic Drama didn't begin till a good dozen years after Waterloo.

Well, we can't afford to wait. While we playgoers are waiting for good plays, our young men are all frittering away their talent in minor poetry, which war seems to bring as relentlessly in its train as shell-shock. But the victims of both maladies ought by now to be on the high-road to recovery, and it is time that the young minor poets turned their attention to something useful, *e.g.*, the reintroduction of the British drama. They have a capital opportunity, since most of our old stalwarts seem to have left the field. Sir Arthur Pinero gives us nothing. Mr. Arthur Henry Jones gives us nothing. Mr. Maugham is, I am told, far away in Borneo, so now is the chance for the young aspirants; the world is all before them where to choose. Of course it is understood that they will drop their verse. That used to be the natural form for plays over two centuries ago. It may come into fashion again, you never can tell, but, quite clearly, the time is not yet. I have heard people ask, "What are the chances for a revival of poetic

drama ? " They really mean verse-drama, but the answer is, that the essence of poetry is not verse, which is merely ornament, but the expression of a certain spiritual state, a certain *état d'ame*, and that there is always room for poetic plays. *Dear Brutus* contained much of the poetic essence ; so does *Mary Rose*. But their language is prose, and our young aspirants may be recommended to write in prose, for which their previous verse-exercises will have been a useful preparation. Only let them hurry up ! Let their hearts swell with the proud hope of creating that magnificent affair, which demands capital letters, the Drama of the Future. Mr. Bergson told us at Oxford that when an interviewer invited him to forecast the drama of the future he answered, " If I could do that I'd write it." So we can only wonder what it will be like. " Sir," said Dr. Johnson to Boswell who was " wondering," " you *may* wonder."

DISRAELI AND THE PLAY

We have all been reading Mr. Buckle's concluding volumes, and when we have recovered from the fascination of the great man and the splendid historical pageant they present to us, we dip into them again in search of trifles agreeable to our own individual taste. And I shall make no apology for turning for a moment from Disraeli in robes of ceremony, the friend of Sovereigns, the hero of Congresses, the great statesman and great Parliament man, to Disraeli the playgoer. That dazzling figure is not readily thought of as a unit in the common playhouse crowd. Yet it is with a feeling of relief from the imposing spectacle of great mundane affairs that you find Disraeli, after receiving in the afternoon the "awful news" of the Russian ultimatum to Turkey (October, 1876), going in the evening with his Stafford House hosts to see *Peril* at the Haymarket, and pleased with the acting of Mrs Kendal. The play, he tells his correspondent, Lady Bradford, is—

"An adaptation from the French *Nos Intimes*—not over-moral, but fairly transmogrified from the original, and cleverly acted in the chief part—a

woman whom, I doubt not, you, an *habituée* of the drama, know very well, but quite new to me. Now she is married, but she was a sister of Robertson, the playwright. She had evidently studied in the French school. The whole was good and the theatre was ventilated; so I did not feel exhausted, and was rather amused, and shd. rather have enjoyed myself had not the bad news thrown its dark shadow over one's haunted consciousness. . . ."

Mrs. Kendal's training was, I fancy, entirely English, but her acting was on a level with the best of "the French school." Disraeli was an old admirer of French acting, as we know from "Coningsby," and I think it is pretty clear from the same source that he particularly liked Déjazet. For he had Déjazet in mind, I guess, in the member of Villebecque's troop of French comedians engaged for the delectation of Lord Monmouth, "a lady of maturer years who performed the heroines, gay and graceful as May." This was the lady, it will be remembered, who saved the situation when Mlle. Flora broke down. "The failure of Flora had given fresh animation to her perpetual liveliness. She seemed the very soul of elegant frolic. In the last scene she figured in male attire; and in air, fashion, and youth beat Villebecque out of the field. She looked younger than Coningsby when he went up to his grandpapa." This is Déjazet to the life. The whole episode of the French players in "Coningsby" shows Disraeli as not only an experienced

playgoer but a connoisseur of the theatre. His description of the company is deliciously knowing—from the young lady who played old woman's parts, "nothing could be more garrulous and venerable," and the old man who "was rather hard, but handy; could take anything either in the high serious or the low droll," to the sentimental lover who "was rather too much bewigged, and spoke too much to the audience, a fault rare with the French; but this hero had a vague idea that he was ultimately destined to run off with a princess."

In "Tancred" there is another, and an entirely charming, glimpse of French strolling players or strollers who played in French, the Baroni family—"Baroni; that is, the son of Aaron; the name of old clothesmen in London, and of Caliphs in Baghdad." There is no more engaging incident in the romantic career of Sidonia than his encounter with this family in a little Flanders town. They played in a barn, to which Sidonia had taken care that all the little boys should be admitted free, and Mlle. Josephine advanced warmly cheered by the spectators, "who thought they were going to have some more tumbling." It was Racine's "Andromaque," however, that she presented, and "it seemed to Sidonia that he had never listened to a voice more rich and passionate, to an elocution more complete; he gazed with admiration on her lightning glance and all the tumult of her noble brow." Sidonia played fairy godmother to the whole family, and

" Mlle. Josephine is at this moment [1849] the glory of the French stage ; without any question the most admirable tragic actress since Clairon, and inferior not even to her." If for Josephine we read Rachel, we shall not be far wrong.

Anyhow, it is evident that, when Disraeli thought Mrs. Kendal must have studied in the French school, he was paying her the highest compliment at his disposal. It is disappointing that we have no criticism from Disraeli of Sarah Bernhardt. Matthew Arnold said that Sarah left off where Rachel began. Disraeli says nothing, which is perhaps significant, for he did see Sarah. He was first asked to see her play at a party at Lord Dudley's, but declined, as he " could not forgo country air." A few weeks later, however, he was at the Wiltons', where " the principal saloon, turned into a charming theatre, received the world to witness the heroine of the hour, Sarah Bernhardt." And that is all. A playgoer of seventy-five is hardly disposed to take up with new favourites—which accounts, perhaps, for Disraeli's verdict on Irving. " I liked the *Corsican Brothers* as a melodrama," he writes to Lady Bradford (November, 1880), " and never saw anything put cleverer on the stage. Irving whom I saw for the first time, is third-rate, and never will improve, but good eno' for the part he played, tho' he continually reminded me of Lord Dudley. . . ." Why " though " ?

On another popular favourite he was even harder.

Writing again to Lady Bradford, he says :—" Except at Wycombe Fair, in my youth, I have never seen anything so bad as *Pinafore*. It was not even a burlesque, a sort of provincial *Black-eyed Susan*. Princess Mary's face spoke volumes of disgust and disappointment, but who cd. have told her to go there ? " Staying later at Hatfield, however, he found all the Cecil youngsters singing the *Pinafore* music. A few years earlier he tells Lady Bradford a story he had just heard from a friend of a visit paid by a distinguished Opposition party to *The Heir at Law* at the old Haymarket. " Into one of the stalls came Ld. Granville ; then in a little time, Gladstone ; then, at last, Harty-Tarty ! Gladstone laughed very much at the performance ; H.-T. never even smiled. 3 conspirators. . . ." Another remarkable trio figures in another story. Disraeli had been to the Aquarium to see a famous ape and the lady who used to be shot out of a cannon. " Chaffed " (if the word is not improper) about this by the Queen at the Royal dinner table, Disraeli said, " There were three sights, madam ; Zazel, Pongo, and myself."

It will be seen that there are few records of Disraeli's playgoing or show-going in his old age. Gladstone, we know, was to the last a frequent playgoer—and, I believe, an enthusiastic admirer of Irving. Disraeli, I take it, had become rather the book-lover than the playgoer. The humblest of us may share that taste with the great man, and

even take refuge in his illustrious example for the habit, denounced by the austere, of reading over solitary meals. Mr. Buckle tells us that " over his solitary and simple dinner he would read one of his favourite authors, mostly classics of either Latin, Italian Renaissance, or English eighteenth century literature, pausing for ten minutes between each course." That passage will endear Disraeli to many of us, simple, home-keeping people, unacquainted with Courts and Parliaments, who feel, perhaps, a little bewildered amid the processional " drums and tramplings " and the gorgeous triumphs of his public career.

HENRY JAMES AND THE THEATRE

Are not the friends of Henry James inclined to be a little too solemn when they write about him, perhaps feeling that they must rise to the occasion and put on their best style, as though he had his eye on them and would be "down" on any lapses? An admirable reviewer of the Letters in the *Literary Supplement* seemed, indeed, so overcome by his subject as to have fallen into one of Henry James's least amiable mannerisms—his introduction of elaborate "figures," relentlessly worked out and at last lagging superfluous. And the editor of the Letters, admirably, too, as he has done his work, is just a little bleak, isn't he?—wearing the grave face of the historian and mindful never to become familiar. "Thank Heaven!" one seems to hear these writers saying to themselves; "even *he* could never have called this vulgar." Such is the posthumous influence of the fastidious "master"! I daresay I am captious. One is never quite satisfied with what one sees in print about people one loved. One always thinks—it is, at any rate, a pleasing illusion—that one has one's own key to that

particular cipher, and to see the thing not merely given away but authoritatively expounded in print is rather a nuisance. Look at the number of fair ladies to whom Henry James wrote letters rich in intimate charm (oh ! and, as he would have said, of a decorum !)—perhaps each of them thought she had the best corner of his heart. The most immaculate of women, young and old, matrons and maidens, *will* sentimentalize their men friends in this way. How could Henry James have escaped ? Well, if any one of these ladies had edited the Letters or reviewed them, wouldn't each of the others have said : " No, that isn't *my* Henry James—*she* never understood him, poor dear " ? I apologize for this flippant way of putting it to the two refined writers I began by mentioning. But, as the lady says in *The Spoils of Poynton*, " I'm quite coarse, thank God ! "

Henry James, unfortunately for his theatrical ambitions, never was. You must not only be coarse in grain, but tough in hide, for success in the theatre. Everybody knows that Henry James achieved only failure there, either crushing failure amid hootings and yells, as with *Guy Domville*, or that very significant failure which is called a success of " esteem," as with his stage versions of *The American* and *Covering End*. But not everybody knows how he positively yearned for the big popular success, and for that biggest, loudest, most brazen-trumpeted of successes, success in the theatre. He talks in his letters as though he actually needed the money,

but it was really not so. He looked round the world and found it teeming with " best sellers," idols of the multitude, who by any standards of his simply couldn't " write," didn't artistically " exist." And the most pathetic thing in his letters is their evidence that he began, aye ! and went on, with the illusion that he, such as he was, the absolute artist, might some day become a " best seller." Even so late as the days of his Collected Edition it came as a shock to him that the great public wouldn't buy.

It is evident that he had good hopes, beforehand, of *Guy Domville*. And yet he hated the actual process of production. The rehearsal, he says, is " as amazing as anything can be, for a man of taste and sensibility, in the odious process of practical dramatic production. I may have been meant for the Drama—God knows !—but I certainly wasn't meant for the Theatre." And when dire failure came, it wasn't, he says, from any defect of technique. " I have worked like a horse—far harder than any one will ever know—over the whole stiff mystery of ' technique '—I have run it to earth, and I don't in the least hesitate to say that, for the comparatively poor and meagre, the piteously simplified purposes of the English stage, I have made it absolutely my own, put it into my pocket." No, the fault must be in his choice of subject. " The question of realizing how different is the attitude of the theatre-goer toward the quality of things which might be a story in a book from his attitude toward

the quality of thing that is given to him as a story in a play is another matter altogether. *That* difficulty is portentous, for any writer who doesn't approach it naïvely, as only a very limited and simple-minded writer can. One has to *make* oneself so limited and simple to conceive a subject, see a subject, simply enough, and that, in a nutshell, is where I have stumbled." "And yet," he adds, pathetically enough (writing to his brother), "if you were to have seen my play!" He knew he had done good work, in his own way, and the plain fact that his way was a way which the gross theatre public would not understand or sympathize with was a terrible blow to him.

The process of turning himself into a simple-minded writer—that is, of making a sow's ear out of a silk purse, was, of course, impossible. One doesn't want to wallow in the obvious. But doesn't it leap at the eyes that an artist who seeks to abandon his own temperament and point of view for another's will forfeit all chance of that spontaneous joy without which there is no artistic creation? Fortunately, this theatrical malady of Henry James's (though he had one or two recurrent twinges of it) never became chronic. The history of his real work is a history not of self-renunciation, but of self-development, of abounding, as the French say, in his own sense. As to the theatrical technique which he had put into his pocket he certainly kept it there. Like most laboriously acquired, alien techniques it was too

technical, too " architectooralooral "—as any one can see who dips into his two forgotten volumes of " Theatricals." His own proper technique was a very different thing, an entirely individual thing, and no reader of his books can have failed to notice how he gradually perfected it as he went along. It reached its highest point, to my thinking, in *The Ambassadors*, surely the greatest of his books (though over this question the fierce tribe of Jacobites will fight to their last gasp), when everything, absolutely everything, is shown as seen through the eyes of Strether. To see a thing so " done " as he would have said, an artistic difficulty so triumphantly mastered, is among the rarest and most exquisite pleasures of life. That was Henry James's function, to give us rare and exquisite pleasures, of a quality never to be had in the modern theatre. He was no theatrical man, but he could, when he chose, be the most delicate of dramatic critics. Read what he says in these Letters about Rostand's *L'Aiglon* (" the man really has talent like an attack of small-pox "), about Bernstein's *Le Secret* as a " case," about Ibsen, " bottomlessly bourgeois . . . and yet of his art he's a master—and I feel in him, to the pitch of almost intolerable boredom, the presence and the insistence of life."

THEATRICAL AMORISM

"THE stage is more beholding to love than the life of man. For as to the stage, love is ever matter of comedies, and now and then of tragedies; but in life, it doth much mischief; sometimes like a siren; sometimes like a fury." It is one of the few things the general reader is able to quote from Bacon, who goes on to make some pointed remarks about love in life, but drops all reference to love on the stage, which he would hardly have done had he been Shakespeare.

But the converse question, how far love is "beholding" to the stage—what treatment it has received there, what justice the stage has done to it—is certainly not without interest. Life is not long enough to deal with the whole question, ranging through the ages, but it may be worth while to consider for a moment what our contemporary English stage is doing with the theme. Are our playwrights addressing themselves to it with sincerity, with veracity, with real insight? Or are they just "muddling through" with it, repeating familiar commonplaces about it, not troubling themselves "to see the thing as it really is"? These questions

have occurred to me in thinking over Mr. Arnold Bennett's *Sacred and Profane Love.* Thinking it over! interrupts the ingenuous reader; but have you not already reviewed it? So it may be well to explain that one "notices" a play and then thinks it over. True, one's "notice"—the virtually instantaneous record of one's first impressions—sometimes wears a specious appearance of thought. But that is one of the wicked deceptions of journalism, mainly designed to appease eager people of the sort who rush up to you the moment the curtain is down on the First Act to ask: "Well, what do you think of it?" In reality, as the wily reader knows, it is at best only thought in the making, a casting about for thought. Not until you have read it yourself next morning can you begin (if you ever do begin) to think. So, as I say, I have been thinking over Mr. Bennett's *Sacred and Profane Love.*

It is not what used to be called a "well-made" play. Its main interest is not cumulative, but is suspended for a whole act and, at its most critical point, relegated to an inter-act. In Act I. the young Carlotta gives herself to Diaz. In Act II. (seven years later) Diaz has dropped clean out. Carlotta, now a famous novelist, is in love with somebody else and shows herself strong enough to renounce her love. Act III. resumes the Carlotta-Diaz story. He has become an abject morphinomaniac; she heroically devotes herself, body and soul, to the terrible task of reclaiming him. *Between* Acts III. and IV.

(fourteen months) this terrible task is accomplished. We have to take it on trust, a rather "large order." Act IV. ends the Carlotta-Diaz story in marriage. Obviously it is not a well-told story. It has a long digression, and the spectator's attention is misled; it assumes a miracle behind the scenes, and the spectator's credulity is over-taxed. Act II. is a play within a play; how Carlotta nearly ran away with her publisher. In Act IV. you cannot accept the alleged recovery of the morphinomaniac, you expect him to "break out" again at any moment. Of course, the story being what it is, there was no help for it. Years of rising to fame as a novelist, months of struggling with a drug victim, cannot be shown on the stage. Only, writers of well-made plays do not choose such stories.

But is this treating the play fairly? Is it just a story, the story of Carlotta and Diaz? Suppose we look at it in another way, suppose we consider it as a study of modern love, or, more particularly, of the modern woman in love. Then the play at once looks much more shipshape. It is the *éducation sentimentale* of Carlotta. The second act ceases to be episodical; it is one of the stages in Carlotta's "love-life" (as Ibsen's Ella Rentheim calls it). The miracle of Diaz's reclamation between the acts ceases to worry us; it only prepares another stage in Carlotta's love-life. And, from this point of view, I think Mr. Bennett has achieved something much better than the construction of a well-made play.

He has given us, in his downright matter-of-fact way, a close study of modern love in the case of a woman made for love, living for it, able to dominate it and to turn it to heroic purpose. She starts her career of love by "giving herself" to a man who is almost a stranger. I suppose this is considered a "bold" scene. But it is, evidently, there from no cheap purpose of "audacity," it is no calculated fling at the proprieties. Mr. Bennett—it is his way—indifferently depicts human nature as he sees it, and the girl's "fall" is natural enough. In a *milieu* of prosaic provincialism (if one may venture so to qualify the Five Towns) she is thrown into contact with a romantic figure from the great world, a famous pianist who has just enraptured her with his music, the embodiment of all her artistic ideals. She is of an amorous temperament (and since Mr. Bennett is undertaking a study of love, it would be no use choosing an ascetic heroine). The inevitable happens. When next seen, she has not seen or heard of the man for years since their one meeting. They have been years of strenuous labour, and she is a successful novelist. But she has not parted with her temperament, and she falls in love with, so to speak, the nearest man. He seems a poor creature for so superior a woman to choose—but such a choice is one of the commonplaces of life. When she realizes the misery she is causing to the man's wife she promptly renounces him. (The wife has a little past love-history of her own—Mr. Bennett neglects

no facet of his subject.) Then Carlotta hears of Diaz and his morphinomania, conceives forthwith her heroic project of rescuing him, takes up her lot with him again, and pulls him through. When he is himself again, he reveals the egoism of the absolute artist. Carlotta must not accompany him to the concert, because she would make him nervous. She obeys, and is left in an agony of suspense at home. When the concert has ended in triumph, he must be off (without his wife) to an influential patron's party. She acquiesces again, not without tears. The men she loves are not worthy of her; but she must love them, she was made for love. There is talk of marriage at the end. It seems an anti-climax.

I find that I have been discussing Mr. Bennett's play instead of the general question into which I proposed to inquire—the treatment of love by our dramatists of to-day. It looks, I fear, like the familiar device of a reviewer for running away from his subject—"unfortunately, our space will not permit, &c."—always very useful when the subject is getting ticklish. But the fact that I have had to dwell on Mr. Bennett's case rather shows how rare that case is with us. The general treatment of love on our stage is, it seems to me, inadequate. Either it is a mere *ficelle*, an expedient for a plot, or it is apt to be conventional, second-hand, unobserved. We want fresh, patient, and fearless studies of it on our stage. I am not asking for calculated "audacity" or

salacity (there has never been any dearth of that), but for veracity. Though the subject is the oldest in the world, it is always becoming new. There are subtleties, fine shades, in our modern love that cannot have been known to the Victorians; yet most of our stage-love to-day remains placidly Victorian. Was it Rochefoucauld or Chamfort who spoke of the many people who would never fall in love if they hadn't heard it talked about? But think how we of to-day have all heard it talked about, what books we have read about it! The old passion has put on a new consciousness, and calls for a new stage-treatment. Where is our Donnay or our Porto-Riche? They, perhaps, pursue their inquiries a little farther than would suit our British delicacy; but our playwrights might at least take a leaf out of their book in the matter of veracity, instead of mechanically repeating the old commonplaces.

H. B. IRVING

THERE is a commonplace about the evanescent glory of actors that will hardly bear close scrutiny. It is said that, as they live more intensely than other men, enjoying their reward on the spot, so they die more completely, and leave behind nothing but a name. Even so, are they worse off than the famous authors whom nobody ever reads? Or than the famous painters whose works have disappeared? Which is the more live figure for us to-day, John Kemble, who played in the *Iron Chest*, or William Godwin, who wrote the original story? Is Zeuxis or Apelles anything more than a name? It is said that whereas other artists survive in their work, the actor's dies with him. But we make of every work of art a palimpsest, and it is for us what we ourselves have written over its original text—so that the artist only lives vicariously, through our own life—while the dead actor's work stands inviolate, out of our reach, a final thing. Lamb says of Dodd's Ague-cheek, "a part of his forehead would catch a little intelligence, and be a long time in communicating it to the remainder." Nothing can alter that forehead now; but if Dodd could have left it behind

him, we should be all agog to revise the verdict. So Mrs. Siddons was famous for her graceful manner of dismissing the guests at Macbeth's banquet. Nothing can impair that grace now; could it have been handed down, we should be having two opinions about it. Dead actors, then, live again in the pages that commemorate them, and they live more securely than the artists whose works survive. They are no longer the sport of opinion.

But this is only casuistry, the vain effort to seek consolation for the death of a friend. I am not speaking of a boon companion, but of something much better, of that ideal, disinterested friend which every actor is for us on the stage, giving us his mind and heart and temperament and physical being, immolating his very self for us, and at the end (I can see Henry Irving the elder standing before the curtain as he uttered the words) our "obliged, respectful, loving servant." This is pure friendship, purer than any private intimacy, with its inevitable contacts and reserves of different egoisms. Why does my mind go back to the elder Irving? Because I am thinking of his son Harry, who was so like him (too like him, it was a perpetual handicap), and never more like him than in that pride which does not ape humility but feels it—the pride of the artist in his art and the humility of the devotee in the temple of art. Indeed, I think Harry Irving had an almost superstitious reverence for his profession. He had it perhaps not merely because he was his father's

son, but also because he was his father's son with a difference, an academic difference; he was one of a little band of Oxford men whose adoption of the stage was, in those days, a breach with orthodox Oxford tradition. All that, I daresay, is altered now. In an Oxford which has widened Magdalen Bridge and built itself new Schools anything is possible. But in those days undergraduates were not habitually qualifying for the stage; indeed, the old "Vic" in term-time was out of bounds. The old "Vic" had only just disappeared when I went up to see young Irving as Decius Brutus in *Julius Cæsar*, and H. B. was still very much an undergraduate. Heavens! the pink and green sweets we ate at supper not far from Tom Tower after the show—the sweets that only undergraduates can eat! If I remember the sweets better than the Decius Brutus, it will be indulgent to infer that Harry Irving's *début* was not of the most remarkable. But his reverence for the histrionic art was, even then. I teazed him (youthful critics have a crude appetite for controversy) by starting an assault, entirely theoretical and Pickwickian, on that reverential attitude; we beat over the ground from Plato to Bossuet; and I think it took him some time to forgive me.

In his earlier years on the stage he was a little stiff and formal—characteristics which were not at all to his disadvantage in the young prig of *The Princess and the Butterfly* and the solemn young man-about-town of *Letty* (though the smart Bond Street suit

and patent leather shoes of the man-about-town were obviously a sore trial to a boy who, from his earliest years, dressed after his father). I imagine his Crichton (1902) was his first real success in London, and an admirable Crichton it was, standing out, as the play demanded, with that vigour and stamp of personal domination which he had inherited from his father. His Hamlet, though his most important, was hardly his best part. It was too cerebral. But is not Hamlet, some one will ask, the very prince of cerebrals? Yes, but Hamlet has grace as well as thought, sweetness as well as light. Harry Irving's Hamlet (of 1905, he softened much in the later revival) was a little didactic, almost donnish. He hardened the hardness of Hamlet—particularly his hardness to women, Ophelia and Gertrude, which we need not be sickly sentimentalists to dislike seeing emphasized. In a word he was impressive rather than charming—was perhaps almost harsh after the conspicuously charming Hamlet of Forbes-Robertson. Nevertheless, if Harry Irving's Hamlet was second to Forbes-Robertson's, it was a very good second.

He had his father's rather Mephistophelean humour—but I am annoyed to find myself always harping on his father. It is a tiresome obsession. None suffered from it more than the son himself, at once hero and martyr of filial piety. He invited comparison, playing as many as possible of his father's old parts, all ragged and threadbare as they

had become. But he lacked the quality which originally saved them, the romantic flamboyant *baroque* quality of his father's genius. Sir Henry impressed himself upon his time by sheer force of individuality and by what Byron calls " magnoperation." He was a great manager as well as a great actor, doing everything on a gigantic scale and in the grand style. He was a splendid figure of romance, off as well as on the stage. It was hopeless to provoke comparison with such a being as this. Though the son showed the family likeness he was naturally a reasonable man, a scholar, a man of discursive analytic mind rather than of the instinctive perfervid histrionic temperament. It was always a pleasure to swop ideas with him, to talk to him about the principles of his art, the great criminals of history, or the latest murder trial he had been attending at the Old Bailey ; but I suspect (I never tried) conversation with his father, in Boswell's phrase, a " tremendous companion," must have been a rather overwhelming experience. . . . And, after all, the wonderful thing is that the son stood the comparison so well, that he was not utterly crushed by it—that the successor of so exorbitant an artist could maintain any orbit of his own. That is a curious corner of our contemporary society the corner of the second generation, where the son mentions " my father " quickly, with a slight drop of the voice, out of a courteous disinclination to let filial respect become a bore to third parties. There is an academician of

the second generation in Pailleron's play who is always alluding to *mon illustre père*, and as the ill-natured say *joue du cadavre*. In our little English corner there is never any such lapse from good taste. Harry Irving was greatly loved there; and will be sadly missed.

THE PUPPETS

At the corner of a Bloomsbury square I found my path blocked by a little crowd of children who were watching a puppet show of an unusual kind. The usual kind, of course, is *Punch and Judy*, which has become a degenerate thing, with its puppets grasped in the operator's hand ; these puppets were wired, in the grand manner of the art, and had a horse and cart, no less, for their transport. The show, though lamentably poor in itself—the puppets merely danced solemnly round and round without any attempt at dramatic action—was rich in suggestion. Do we not all keep a warm corner of our hearts for the puppets, if only for their venerable antiquity and their choice literary associations ? Why, in the grave pages of the *Literary Supplement* learned archæologists have lately been corresponding about the Elizabethan " motions," and Sir William Ridgeway has traced the puppets back to the Syracuse of Xenophon's day, and told us how that author in his " Symposium " makes a famous Syracusan puppet player say that he esteems fools above other men because they are those who go to see his puppets (*νευρόσπαστα*). My own recollec-

tions connect Xenophon with parasangs rather than puppets, but I am glad to be made aware of this honourable pedigree, though I strongly resent the Syracusan's remark about the amateurs of puppets. I share the taste of Partridge, who " loved a puppet show of all the pastimes upon earth," and I sympathize with the showman in " Tom Jones " who could tolerate all religions save that of the Presbyterians, " because they were enemies to puppet shows." And so I lingered with the children at the corner of the Bloomsbury square.

Puppets, someone has said, have this advantage over actors : they are made for what they do, their nature conforms exactly to their destiny. I have seen them in Italy performing romantic drama with a dash and a *panache* that no English actor in my recollection (save, perhaps, the late Mr. Lewis Waller) could rival. Actors, being men as well as actors, and therefore condemned to effort in acting, if only the effort of keeping down their consciousness of their real, total self, cannot attain to this clear-cut definiteness and purity of performance. But the wire-puller must be a true artist, his finger-tips responsive to every emotional thrill of the character and every *nuance* of the drama ; indeed, the ideal wire-puller is the poet himself, expressing himself through the motions of his puppets and declaiming his own words for them.

It was with this thought in my mind that I ventured, when Mr. Hardy first published *The*

Dynasts, to suggest that the perfect performance of that work would be as a puppet show, with Mr. Hardy reading out his own blank verse. I pointed out the suggestive reference to puppets in the text. One of the Spirits describes the human protagonists as " mere marionettes," and elsewhere you read :—

> Forgetting the Prime Mover of the gear
> As puppet-watchers him who moves the strings.

Further, at the very core of Mr. Hardy's drama is the idea that these Napoleons and Pitts and Nelsons are puppets of the Immanent Will. If ever there was a case for raising a puppet show to the highest literary dignity, this was one.

But it was all in vain. Either Mr. Hardy was too modest to declaim his own verse in public, or else the actors pushed in, as they will wherever they can, and laid hands on as much of his work as they could manage. And so we had Mr. Granville Barker's version early in the war and only the other day the performance at Oxford, and I have nothing to say against either, save that they were, and could only be, extracts, episodes, fragments, instead of the great epic-drama in its panoramic entirety. A puppet show could embrace the whole, and one voice declaiming the poem would to be sure not give the necessary unity of impression—that singleness must be first of all in the work itself—but would incidentally emphasize it.

The puppet presentation would, however, do much more than this. It would clarify, simplify,

attenuate the medium through which the poem reaches the audience. The poet and his public would be in close contact. It is, of course, for many minds, especially for those peculiarly susceptible to poetry, a perpetual grievance against the actors that these living, bustling, solid people get between them and the poet and substitute fact, realism, flesh-and-blood for what these minds prefer to embody only in their imagination. There is the notorious instance of Charles Lamb, with his objection to seeing Shakespeare's tragedies acted. He complained that the gay and witty Richard III. was inevitably materialized and vulgarized by the actor. Lamb, as we all know, was capricious, and indeed made a virtue of caprice, but what do you say to so serious and weighty a critic as Professor Raleigh ? Talking about the Shakespearean boy-actors of women, he commits himself to this :—" It may be doubted whether Shakespeare has not suffered more than he has gained by the genius of later-day actresses, who bring into the plays a realism and a robust emotion which sometimes obscure the sheer poetic value of the author's conception. The boys were no doubt very highly trained, and amenable to instruction ; so that the parts of Rosalind and Desdemona may well have been rendered with a clarity and simplicity which served as a transparent medium for the author's wit and pathos. Poetry, like religion, is outraged when it is made a platform for the exhibition of their own talent and passions by those who

are its ministers. With the disappearance of the boy-players the poetic drama died in England, and it has had no second life."

A little "steep," is it not? Logically it is an objection to all acting of poetic drama. Boy-players of girls are only a half-way house. The transparent medium for the author's wit and pathos would be still more transparent if it were merely the medium of the printed page. Now this much is certain. Shakespeare conceived his plays, whatever poetry or wit or pathos he put into them, in terms of men and women (not boy-women). The ideal performance of Shakespeare would be by the men and women who grew in Shakespeare's imagination. But they, unfortunately, do not exist in flesh and blood, but only in that imagination, and, to bring them on the stage, you have to employ ready-made men and women, who at the very best can only be rough approximations to the imaginary figures. In this sense it is not a paradox but a simple commonplace to say that no one has ever seen Shakespeare's Hamlet on the stage, or ever will see. And the greater the "genius" of the actor, the more potent his personality—though he will be the darling of the majority, thirsting for realism, the immediate sense of life—the more will he get between the poet and imaginative students like Lamb and Professor Raleigh, who want their poetry inviolate.

This seems like a digression, but is really to my purpose. Flesh-and-blood actors we shall always

have with us; they will take good care of that themselves. But for the imaginative souls who are for compromise, who are for halfway houses and look back fondly to the boy-players, I would say: Why not try the puppets? These also present a "transparent medium" for the author's expression. And, further, the purely "lyrical" passages in which Shakespeare abounds and which seem so odd in the realism of the human actors (*e.g.*, the Queen's description of Ophelia's death) would gain immensely by being recited by the poet (or wire-puller). A puppet-show *Hamlet* might be an exquisite experiment in that highest art whose secret is suggestion.

VICISSITUDES OF CLASSICS

Of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, revived by the Phœnix Society, I said that it was a live classic no longer, but a museum-classic, a curio for connoisseurs. Its multiplication of violent deaths in the last act (four men stabbed and one courtesan poisoned) could no longer be taken seriously, and, in fact, provoked a titter in the audience. This sudden change of tragic into comic effect was fatal to that unity of impression without which not merely a tragedy but any work of art ceases to be an organic whole. The change was less the fault of Webster than of the Time Spirit. Apparently the early Jacobeans could accept a piled heap of corpses at the end of a play without a smile, as "all werry capital." Violent death was not so exceptional a thing in their own experience as it is in ours. They had more simplicity of mind than we have, a more childlike docility in swallowing whole what the playwright offered them. But Webster was not without fault. One assassination treads so hastily upon the heels of the other, the slaughter is so wholesale. *Hamlet* closes with several violent deaths, yet Shakespeare managed to avoid this pell-mell wholesale effect.

But there is another element in Webster's workmanship which, I think, has helped to deprive the play of life. I mean his obtrusive ingenuity. I am not referring to the ingenuity of the tortures practised upon the unhappy Duchess—the severed hand thrust into hers, the wax figure purporting to be her slain husband, and so forth. This fiendish ingenuity is proper to the character of the tyrant Ferdinand, and its exercise does add a grisly horror to the play. I mean the ingenuity of Webster himself, a perverted, wasted ingenuity, in his play-construction. He seems to have ransacked his fancy in devising scenic experiments. There is the " echo " scene. It is theatrically ineffective. It gives you no tragic emotion, but only a sense of amused interest in the author's ingenuity, and you say, " How quaint ! " Then there is the little device for giving a touch of irony to the Cardinal's murder. He has warned the courtiers, for purposes of his own, that if they hear him cry for help in the night they are to take no notice ; he will be only pretending. And so, when he cries for help in real earnest, he is hoist with his own petard, and the courtiers only cry, " Fie upon his counterfeiting." Again the theatrical effect is small ; you are merely distracted from the tragic business in hand by the author's curious ingenuity. For any one interested in the theatrical *cuisine* these experiments, of course, have their piquancy. Webster seems to have been perpetually seeking for " new thrills "—like the Grand Guignol people in our own day.

had some lucky finds. The masque of madmen, for instance, is a tremendous thrill, one of the biggest, I daresay, in the history of tragedy. But there were experiments that didn't come off.

At any rate they fail with us. Webster, no doubt, had his true " posterity " (was it perchance contemporary with Pepys ?), but we are his post-posterity. In a sense every masterpiece is in advance of its time. " The reason," says Marcel Proust (" A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs ")—

" The reason why a work of genius is admired with difficulty at once is that the author is extraordinary, that few people resemble him. It is his work itself that in fertilizing the rare minds capable of comprehending it makes them grow and multiply. Beethoven's quartets (XII., XIII., XIV., and XV.) have taken fifty years to give birth and growth to the Beethoven quartet public, thus realizing like every masterpiece a progress in the society of minds, largely composed to-day of what was not to be found when the masterpiece appeared, that is to say, of beings capable of loving it. What we call posterity is the posterity of the work itself. The work must create its own posterity."

Assuredly we of to-day can see more in *Hamlet* than its first audience could. But the curve of " posterity " is really a zig-zag. Each generation selects from a classic what suits it. Few of the original colours are " fast " ; some fade, others grow more vivid and then fade in their turn. The

Jacobean playgoer was impressed by Webster's heaped corpses, and we titter. He probably revelled in the mad scene of the " lycanthropic " Ferdinand, where we are bored. (The taste for mad scenes was long lived; it lasted from the Elizabethans, on through Betterton's time—see Valentine in *Love for Love*—and Garrick's time, as we know from Boswell's anecdote about *Irene*, down to the moment when Tilburina went mad in white satin.) On the other hand, a scene which has possibly gained in piquancy for us of to-day, the proud contemporaries of Mr. Shaw, is that wherein the Duchess woos the coy Antonio and weds him out of hand. When we chance upon a thing like this in a classic we are apt, fatuously enough, to exclaim, " How modern ! "

No one is likely to make that exclamation over another classic of momentary revival, *Le Malade Imaginaire*. There is not a vestige of " modernity " in Molière's play. It is absolutely primitive. Or rather it seems, in all essentials, to stand outside time, to exhibit nothing of any consequence that " dates." It has suffered no such mishap as has befallen Webster's tragedy—a change of mental attitude in the audience which has turned the author's desired effect upside down. At no point at which Molière made a bid for our laughter are we provoked, contrariwise, to frown. You cannot, by the way, say this about all Molière. Much, *e.g.*, of the fun in *George Dandin* strikes a modern audience as merely cruel. Both in Alceste and Tartuffe there has been

a certain alteration of " values " in the progress of the centuries. But *Le Malade Imaginaire* is untouched. We can enjoy it, I imagine, with precisely the same delight as its first audience felt. Some items of it, to be sure, were actual facts for them which are only history for us ; the subservience of children to parents, for instance, and (though Mr. Shaw will not agree) the pedantic humbug of the faculty. But the point is, that the things laughed at, though they may have ceased to exist in fact, are as ridiculous as ever. And note that our laughter is not a whit affected by childish absurdities in the plot. Argan's little girl shams dead and he immediately assumes she is dead. Argan shams dead and neither his wife nor his elder daughter for a moment questions the reality of his death. His own serving-wench puts on a doctor's gown and he is at once deceived by the disguise. These little things do not matter in the least. We are willing to go all lengths in make-believe so long as we get our laughter.

Here, then, is a classic which seems to be outside the general rule. It has not had to make, in M. Proust's phrase, its own posterity. It has escaped those vicissitudes of appreciation which classics are apt to suffer from changes in the general condition of the public mind. . . . But stay ! If it has always been greeted with the same abundance of laughter, has the quality of that laughter been invariable ? Clearly not, for Molière is at pains to apologize in his

play for seeming to laugh at the faculty, whereas, he says, he has only in view "le ridicule de la médecine." Between half-resentful, half-fearful laughter at a Purgon or Diafoirus who may be at your bedside next week and light-hearted laughter at figures that have become merely fantastic pantaloons there is considerable difference. And so we re-establish our general rule.

PERVERTED REPUTATIONS

Sir Henry Irving used to tell how he and Toole had gone together to Stratford, and fallen into talk with one of its inhabitants about his great townsman. After many cross-questions and crooked answers, they arrived at the fact that the man knew that Shakespeare had " written for summat." " For what ? " they enquired. " Well," replied the man, " I do think he wrote for the Bible."

This story illustrates a general law which one might, perhaps, if one were inclined to pseudo-scientific categories, call the law of perverted reputations. I am thinking more particularly of literary reputations, which are those I happen chiefly to care about. And literary reputations probably get perverted more frequently than others, for the simple reason that literature always has been and (despite the cheap manuals, Board schools, and the modern improvements) still is an unfathomable mystery to the outer busy world. But, to get perverted, the reputations must be big enough to have reached the ears of that outer world. What happens, thereafter, seems to be something like this. The man in the back street understands vaguely that so-and-so is

esteemed a great man. Temperamentally and culturally incapable of appreciating the works of literary art, for which so-and-so is esteemed great, the back-streeter is driven to account for his greatness to himself on grounds suitable to his own comprehension, which grounds in the nature of the case have nothing to do with the fine art of literature. The general tendency is to place these grounds in the region of the marvellous. For the capacity for wonder is as universal as the capacity for literature is strictly limited.

Thus you have the notorious instance of Virgil figuring to the majority of men in the middle ages not as a poet but as a magician. Appreciation of his poetry was for the " happy few " ; by the rest his reputation was too great to be ignored, so they gave it a twist to accommodate it to the nature of their own imaginations. In more recent times, indeed in our own day, there is the equally notorious instance of Shakespeare. The Stratford rustic knew nothing of Shakespeare's plays, but did know (1) that there was a great man called Shakespeare, and (2) that there was a great book called the Bible. He concluded that Shakespeare must have written for the Bible. But I am thinking of a very different perversion of Shakespeare's reputation. I am thinking of the strange people, exponents of the back-street mind, who, being incapable of appreciating Shakespeare's poetry and dramatic genius—having in fact no taste for literature as such—have assigned his greatness

to something compatible with their own prosaic pedestrian taste and turned him into a contriver of cryptograms. Again you see the old appetite for wonder reappearing. The imputed reputation, as in Virgil's case, is for something *abscons*, as Rabelais would have said, something occult.

It is the old story. Superstition comes easier to the human mind than artistic appreciation. But superstition has played an odd freak in the case of Shakespeare. It is actually found side by side with artistic appreciation, of which it presents itself as the superlative, or ecstatic, degree. There is, for instance, an Oxford professor to whom the world is indebted for the most delicate, the most sympathetic, as well as the most scholarly appreciation of Shakespeare in existence. Yet this professor is so affronted by the flesh-and-blood domination of the actresses who play Shakespeare's heroines, the dangerous competition of their personal charm with the glamour of the text, that he has committed himself to the startling proposition that poetic drama perished with Shakespeare's boy actors! Jealousy for Shakespeare's individual supremacy in artistic creation, which must "brook no rival near the throne," has turned the professor into a misogynist. This I venture to call Shakespearean superstition. And there is another Oxford professor (oh, home of lost causes and forsaken beliefs!) who assures us that we can unravel all Shakespearean problems by a careful study of the text alone. Don't trouble

your minds about the actual facts in view of which the text had been written and in which it was to be spoken. Don't ask where Shakespeare's theatres were and what the audiences were like and what kind of shows they were used to and continued to expect. Don't bother about the shape of the stage or its position in regard to the public. Stick to the text, and nothing but the text, and all shall be made plain unto you. It is this same professor who occasionally treats Shakespeare's imaginary characters as though they were real persons, with independent biographies of their own. He obliges us with conjectural fragments of their biographies. "Doubtless in happier days he (Hamlet) was a close and constant observer of men and manners." "All his life he had believed in her (Gertrude), we may be sure, as such a son would." Shakespearian superstition again, you see, not merely alongside but actually growing out of artistic appreciation.

Literary critics, as a rule, have suffered less than so-called literary "creators" from perverted reputations. The reason is plain. The man in the back street has never heard of criticism. But what, it will be asked, about the strange case of Aristotle? Well, I submit that in his case the perversion arose from the second cause I have indicated—not from the ignorance of the multitude but from the superstitious veneration of the few. Who was it who began the game by calling Aristotle "the master of those who know"? A poet who was also a scholar. Who

declared Aristotle's authority in philosophy to equal St. Paul's in theology ? Roger Bacon (they say ; I have not myself asked for this author at Mudie's or *The Times* Book Club). Who said there could be no possible contradiction between the Poetics and Holy Writ ? Dacier, an eminent Hellenist. Who declared the rules of Aristotle to have the same certainty for him as the axioms of Euclid ? Lessing, an esteemed " highbrow." The gradual process, then, by which the real Aristotle, pure thinker, critic investigating and co-ordinating the facts of the actual drama of his time, was perverted into the spurious Aristotle, Mumbo Jumbo of criticism, mysteriarch, depositary of the Tables of the Law, was the same process that we have seen at work in the case of Shakespeare —enthusiastic appreciation toppling over into superstition.

But none of us can afford to put on airs about it. *Mutato nomine de te.* For, after all, what are these various cases but extreme instances of the " personal equation " that enters into every, even the sanest opinion ? Can any one of us do anything else towards appreciating a work of art than remake it within himself ? So, if we are to avoid these absurd extremes, let us look to ourselves, do our best to get ourselves into harmony with the artist, and " clear our minds of cant."

THE SECRET OF GREEK ART

Mathematics may be great fun. Even simple arithmetic is not without its comic side, as when it enables you to find, with a little management, the Number of the Beast in the name of any one you dislike. Then there is "the low cunning of algebra." It became low cunning indeed when Euler drove (so the anecdotist relates) Diderot out of Russia with a sham algebraical formula. "Monsieur," said Euler gravely, "$\frac{a+b^n}{n}=x$, *donc Dieu existe; répondez.*" Diderot, no algebraist, could not answer, and left.

But geometry furnishes the best sport. Here is a learned American archæologist, Mr. Jay Hambidge, lecturing to that august body the Hellenic Society and revealing to them his discovery that the secret of classic Greek art (of the best period) is a matter of two magic rectangles. I understand that the learned gentleman himself did not make this extreme claim about the "secret" of "Art," but it was at any rate so described in the report on which my remarks are based. Mr. Hambidge appears to have devoted years of labour and ingenuity to his researches. The result is in any case of curious interest. But

how that result can be said to be "the secret of Greek art revealed" I wholly fail to see.

Let us look first at his rectangles. His first is $2 \times \sqrt{5}$. It is said that these figures represent the ratio of a man's height to the full span of his outstretched fingers. But what man? Of what race and age? Well, let us say an average Greek of the best period, and pass on. Mr. Hambidge has found this rectangle over and over again in the design of the Parthenon. "Closely akin" to it, says the report, is another fundamental rectangle, of which the two dimensions are in the ratio of Leonardo's famous "golden section." That ratio is obtained by dividing a straight line so that its greater is to its lesser part as the whole is to the greater. Let us give a mathematical meaning to the "closely akin." Calling the lesser part 1 and the greater x, then—

$$\frac{x}{1} = \frac{x+1}{x} \text{ or } x^2 - x - 1 = 0$$

which gives you

$$x = \frac{\sqrt{5}+1}{2}.$$

The square roots will not trouble you when you come to constructing your rectangles, for the diagonal of the first is $\sqrt{(5+4)}$, or 3. If AB is your side 2, draw a perpendicular to it through B, and with A as centre describe the arc of a circle of radius 3; the point of intersection will give C, the other end of the diagonal. The second rectangle maintains AB, and simply prolongs BC by half of

AB or 1. Just as the dimensions of the first rectangle are related to those of (selected) man, and to the plan of the Parthenon, so those of the second are related, it seems, to the arrangement of seeds in the sunflower and to the plan of some of the Pyramids. Sir Theodore Cook writes to *The Times* to say that both the sunflower and the Pyramid discoveries are by no means new.

The fact is the theory of " beautiful " rectangles is not new. The classic exponent of it is Fechner, who essayed to base it on actual experiment. He placed a number of rectangular cards of various dimensions before his friends, and asked them to select the one they thought most beautiful. Apparently the " golden section " rectangle got most votes. But " most of the persons began by saying that it all depended on the application to be made of the figure, and on being told to disregard this, showed much hesitation in choosing." (Bosanquet: "History of Æsthetic," p. 382.) If they had been Greeks of the best period, they would have all gone with one accord for the " golden section " rectangle.

Nor have the geometers of beauty restricted their favours to the rectangle. Some have favoured the circle, some the square, others the ellipse. And what about Hogarth's " line of beauty " ? I last saw it affectionately alluded to in the advertisement of a corset manufacturer. So, evidently, Hogarth's idea has not been wasted.

One sympathizes with Fechner's friends who said

it all depended upon the application to be made of the figure. The "art" in a picture is generally to be looked for inside the frame. The Parthenon may have been planned on the $\frac{\sqrt{5}}{2}$ rectangle, but you cannot evolve the Parthenon itself out of that vulgar fraction. Fechner proceeded on the assumption that art is a physical fact and that its "secret" could be wrung out of it, as in any other physical inquiry, by observation and experiment, by induction from a sufficient number of facts. But when he came to have a theory of it he found, like anybody else, that introspection was the only way.

And whatever rectangles Mr. Hambidge may discover in Greek works of art, he will not thereby have revealed the secret of Greek art. For rectangles are physical facts (when they are not mere abstractions), and art is not a physical fact, but a spiritual activity. It is in the mind of the artist, it is his vision, the expression of his intuition, and beauty is only another name for perfect expression. That, at any rate, is the famous "intuition-expression" theory of Benedetto Croce, which at present holds the field. It is a theory which, of course, presents many difficulties to the popular mind—what æsthetic theory does not?—but it covers the ground, as none other does, and comprehends all arts, painting, poetry, music, sculpture, and the rest, in one. Its main difficulty is its distinction between the æsthetic fact, the artist's expression, and the physical fact, the

externalization of the artist's expression, the so-called " work " of art. Dr. Bosanquet has objected that this seems to leave out of account the influence on the artist's expression of his material, his medium, but Croce, I think, has not overlooked that objection ("Estetica," Ch. XIII., end), though many of us would be glad if he could devote some future paper in the *Critica* to meeting it fairly and squarely. Anyhow, æsthetics is not a branch of physics, and the " secret " of art is not to be " revealed " by a whole Euclidful of rectangles.

But it is, of course, an interesting fact that certain Greeks, and before them certain Egyptians, took certain rectangles as the basis of their designs —rectangles which are also related to the average proportions of the human body and to certain botanical types. If Mr. Hambidge—or his predecessors, of whom Sir Theodore Cook speaks—have established this they have certainly put their fingers on an engaging convention. Who would have thought that the " golden section " that very ugly-looking $\frac{\sqrt{5}+1}{2}$ could have had so much in it? The builder of the Great Pyramid of Ghizeh knew all about it in 4700 B.C. and the Greeks of the age of Pericles, and then Leonardo da Vinci toyed with it —" *que de choses dans un menuet!* " It is really rather cavalier of Croce to dismiss this golden section along with Michael Angelo's serpentine lines of beauty as the astrology of Æsthetic.

A POINT OF CROCE'S

Adverting to Mr. Jay Hambidge's rectangles of beauty I had occasion to cite Croce and his distinction between the æsthetic fact of expression and the practical fact of externalization, to which distinction, I said, Dr. Bosanquet had objected that it ignored the influence upon the artist of his medium. Dr. Bosanquet has courteously sent me a copy of a communication, "Croce's Æsthetic," which he has made to the British Academy, and which deals not only with this point, but with his general objections to the Crocean philosophy of art. It is not all objection, far from it; much of it is highly laudatory, and all of it is manifestly written in a spirit of candour and simple desire to arrive at the truth. But I have neither the space nor the competence to review the whole pamphlet, and I will confine myself to the particular point with which I began. While suggesting, however, some criticisms of Dr. Bosanquet's contentions, I admit the suspicion that I may resemble one of those disputants who, as Renan once said, at the bottom of their minds are a little of the opinion of the other side. That, indeed, was why I said that many of us would be glad to hear further on

the point from Croce himself. But with Dr. Bosanquet's pamphlet before me I cannot afford to " wait and see." I must say, with all diffidence, what I can.

Dr. Bosanquet describes the Crocean view quite fairly. " The ' work of art,' then, picture, statue, musical performance, printed or spoken poem, is called so only by a metaphor. It belongs to the practical (economic) and not to the æsthetic phase of the spirit, and consists merely of expedients adopted by the artist as a practical man, to ensure preservation and a permanent possibility of reproduction for his imaginative intuition. The art and beauty lie primarily in his imagination, and secondarily in the imagination of those to whom his own may communicate its experience. The picture and the music are by themselves neither art nor beauty nor intuition-expression."

But when Dr. Bosanquet goes on to make his inferences, I suggest that he infers too much. " Thus," he says, " all embodiment in special kinds of physical objects by help of special media and special processes is wholly foreign to the nature of art and beauty . . . There is nothing to be learned from the practical means by help of which intuitions of beauty receive permanence and communicability." " Wholly foreign " and " nothing to be learned " are, I think, too strong. Though the practical means are distinct from art, they are part of the artist's experience. The artist is not working *in vacuo*. He

is a certain man, with a certain nature and experience, at a certain moment of time. His joy, say, in handling and modelling clay (I take this example from an old lecture of Dr. Bosanquet's) will be one of the factors in his experience. In that sense it will not be " wholly foreign " to his art, and he will have " learned " something from it. It is not itself the art-impulse, the expressive activity, but it is, what Croce calls it, a *point d'appui* for a new one.

For let us hear what Croce himself says on this point (" Estetica," Ch. XIII.). " To the explanation of physical beauty as a mere aid for the reproduction of internal beauty, or expression, it might be objected, that the artist creates his expressions in the act of painting or carving, writing or composing ; and that therefore physical beauty, instead of following, sometimes precedes æsthetic beauty. This would be a very superficial way of understanding the procedure of the artist, who, in reality, makes no stroke of the brush without having first seen it in his imagination ; and, if he has not yet seen it, will make it, not to externalize his expression (which at that moment does not exist), but as it were on trial and to have a mere *point d'appui* for further meditation and internal concentration. The physical *point d'appui* is not physical beauty, instrument of reproduction, but a means that might be called *pedagogic*, like retiring to solitude or the many other expedients, often queer enough, adopted by artists and men of science and varying according to their various

idiosyncrasies." Can we not put it more generally and say that the artist's historic situation is changing at every moment and his experience with his medium is part of that situation (just as is the date of his birth, his country, or the state of his digestion), or in other words, one of the influences that make him what he is and not some one else? But to admit that, it seems to me, is not at all to deny the independence of his spiritual activity in expression any more than the freedom of the will is denied by the admission that will must always be exercised in a definite historical situation.

What Dr. Bosanquet cannot abide is Croce's great principle that in æsthetic philosophy there are no arts but only art. He says this "offers to destroy our medium of intercourse through the body and through natural objects." Why "destroy"? Surely it is not a case of destruction but of removal; removal from the philosophy of art to that of practice. Croce is not quite so foolish as to offer to destroy things indestructible; he is only trying to put them in their place.

"The truth is, surely, that different inclinations of the spirit have affinities with different qualities and actions of body—meaning by body that which a sane philosophy accepts as concretely and completely actual in the world of sense-perception. The imagination of the particular artist is

like the dyer's hand,
Subdued to what it works in,

and its intuition and expression assume a special type in accordance with the medium it delights in, and necessarily develop certain capacities and acknowledge, however tacitly, certain limitations." Who denies anything so obvious? Certainly not Croce. What he denies, I take it, is that these considerations, however valuable in their right place, are proper to a philosophy of art. They are classifications and generalizations, he would say, and philosophy deals not with *generalia* but with universals. To say that art is one is not to say that Raphael and Mozart are one. There are no duplicates in human life and no two artists have the same activity of intuition-expression. You may classify them in all sorts of ways; those who express themselves in paint, those who express themselves in sounds, and so forth; or sub-classify them into landscapists, portraitists, etc., etc.; or sub-sub-classify them into "school" of Constable, "school" of Reynolds, etc., etc. But you are only getting further and further away from anything like a philosophy of art, and will have achieved at best a manual or history of technique. In a philosophic theory Dr. Bosanquet's "affinities of the spirit" are a will-o'-the-wisp. Thereupon he says, crushingly, "if you insist on neglecting these affinities of the spirit, your theory remains abstract, and has no illuminating power." Well, Croce's theory is certainly "up there," it inhabits the cold air of pure ideas; it will not be of the least practical use at the Academy Schools or the

Royal College of Music ; but when a philosopher like Dr. Bosanquet finds no illumination in a theory which unifies the arts, gives a comprehensible definition of beauty and, incidentally, constructs, to say the least of it, a plausible "cycle of reality," I can but respectfully wonder.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

I was, perhaps rather naïvely, surprised the other day to hear an actor asking for Hazlitt's "View of the English Stage." Actors in general, whether correctly or incorrectly I cannot say, are reputed to be not enthusiastically given to reading. On the face of it, the thing seems likely enough. Their business is to be men of action and talk and the busy world—not sedentary contemplative, cloistered students. Your bookworm is as a rule a shy, retiring solitary; the very opposite of your actor who must not only boldly show himself but take a pride in being stared at. Logically, then, I ought not to have been as shocked as I was when the late Henry Neville some years ago roundly declared to me that an actor "should never read." Yet the thought of a life without literature seemed so appalling! It is possible, however, to be a reader, and a voracious reader, yet not to read Hazlitt's stage criticisms. The epoch is gone. Kean is long since dead. Our theatrical interests to-day are widely different from those of our ancestors a century ago. And Hazlitt's criticisms have not the loose, discursive, impressionistic, personal, intimate charm of his other

essays, his "Table Talk," his "Round Table," or his "Plain Speaker." They simply show him in the "dry light" of the specialist, the closet-student turned playgoer, but these give a warm, coloured, speaking likeness of the whole man. I was surprised, then, to hear my friend the actor asking for Hazlitt's stage criticisms. I venture to inquire what, particularly, he wanted them for. "Oh," he said, "I like to read about Kean."

And certainly if you want to read about Kean, Hazlitt is your man. It has been said, over and over again, that it was good luck for both actor and critic that Hazlitt had just begun his theatrical work on the *Morning Chronicle* when Kean made his first appearance as Shylock at Drury Lane. Hazlitt helped to make Kean's reputation and Kean's acting was an invaluable stimulant to Hazlitt's critical faculties. It is said, by the way, that Kean was originally recommended to Hazlitt's notice by his editor, Perry. Things of this sort may have happened in that weird time of a century ago, but the age of miracles is passed. Editors of daily newspapers in our time are not on the look-out for unrevealed histrionic genius. They have other fish to fry. But Perry seems to have been a most interfering editor. He plagued his critic with his own critical opinions. Hazlitt's first "notice" in the *Chronicle* was about Miss Stephens as Polly in *The Beggar's Opera*. "When I got back, after the play" (note that he had meditated in advance his "next

day's criticism, trying to do all the justice I could to so interesting a subject. I was not a little proud of it by anticipation "—happy Hazlitt!) "Perry called out, with his cordial, grating voice, 'Well, how did she do?' and on my speaking in high terms, answered that 'he had been to dine with his friend the Duke, that some conversation had passed on the subject, he was afraid it was not the thing, it was not the true *sostenuto* style; but as I had written the article' (holding my peroration on *The Beggar's Opera* carelessly in his hand), 'it might pass.' . . . I had the satisfaction the next day to meet Miss Stephens coming out of the Editor's room, who had been to thank him for his very flattering account of her." That "carelessly" is a delicious touch, which will come home to every scribbler. But Perry and his friend the Duke and that glimpse of a petticoat whisking out of the editor's room! What a queer, delightful, vanished newspaper-world! There were, however, even in those days, editors who did not interfere. Hazlitt was, for a brief period, dramatic critic of *The Times* (his most notable contribution was his notice of Kemble's retirement in *Coriolanus*, June 25th, 1817), and was evidently well treated, for in his preface to the "View" (1818) he advises "any one who has an ambition to write, and to write *his best* in the periodical Press, to get, if he can, a position in *The Times* newspaper, the editor of which is a man of business and not a man of letters. He may write

there as long and as good articles as he can, without being turned out for it." One can only account for Hazlitt's singular ideal of an editor as Johnson accounted for an obscure passage in Pope, "Depend upon it, Sir, he wished to vex somebody." Hazlitt only wanted to be disagreeable to Perry.

Nevertheless, the *Chronicle* had had the best of Hazlitt's stage criticisms, his papers on Kean. Kean's acting, as I have said, was invaluable to Hazlitt as a stimulus. It stimulated him to a sort of rivalry in Shakespearean interpretation, the actor fairly setting his own conception of the part against the actor's rendering of it, giving him magnificent praise when the two agreed, and often finding carefully pondered reasons for disagreement. Hazlitt might have said of Kean what Johnson said of Burke: "This fellow calls forth all my powers." The result is twofold. You get vivid descriptions of Kean's acting, his voice, his figure, his gestures, his perpetual passionateness, in season and out of season (misrepresenting—*e.g.*, Shakespeare's Richard II., as Hazlitt said, as a character of passion instead of as a character of pathos). And at the same time you get the "psychology" (an inevitable *cliché*, cast since Hazlitt's day) of the chief Shakespearean tragic characters, carefully "documented" by the text and elaborated and coloured by Hazlitt's sympathetic vision. You see the same process at work in the criticisms of Kemble and Mrs. Siddons and Macready, but (remember the great Sarah had had

her day before Hazlitt began to write) with a milder stimulant there was a milder response. In any case it was a gallery of portraits—a series of full-length figures partly from life and partly from the Shakespearean text. There was little background or atmosphere.

That is what makes Hazlitt's criticism so unlike any modern sort. He wrote in an age of great histrionics, great interpretative art, but no drama, no creative art. His elaborate studies of dead-and-gone players have (except as illustrating Shakespeare) often a merely antiquarian interest. It is a curious detail that Kean's Richard III. in early performances "stood with his hands stretched out, after his sword was taken from him," and later "actually fought with his doubled fists like some helpless infant." So it is a curious detail that Napoleon I. wore a green coat and clasped his hands behind his back. But compare this dwelling on the *minutiæ* of an actor's business or, to take a fairer example, compare Hazlitt's analysis of the character of Iago (as a test of Kean's presentation)—one of his acutest things—with the range and variety and philosophic depth of a criticism by Jules Lemaître. You are in a different world. Instead of the niggling details of how this man raised his arm at a given moment or delivered a classic speech in a certain way you get a criticism of life, all life, *quicquid agunt homines*. It is interesting, mildly interesting, to know that Kean's Richard was (for Hazlitt) too

grave and his Iago too gay, but after all we cannot be perpetually contemplating these particular personages of Shakespeare. We need fresh ideas, fresh creations, new views of society, anything for a change, so long as it is a thing " to break our minds upon." We have no " great " Shakespearean actors now, but even if we had, should we care to devote to them the minute, elaborate attention paid by Hazlitt ? One thinks of that time, a hundred years ago, of the great tragedy kings and queens as rather a stuffy world. Playgoing must have been a formidable enterprise . . . but yet, you never can tell. There were frolicsome compensations. You might come back from the play to the office to learn your editor had been dining with a duke. And with luck next morning you might find a pretty actress at his door.

TALK AT THE MARTELLO TOWER

Our boatman with blue eyes and red cheeks is not more skilful with the oar than any of his fellows or more ready to give you change out of a shilling when he has rowed you across the harbour, though the notice board says the fare is twopence. But the ladies love primary colours, and we had to have him. We all three had our novels, and the blue eyes glanced at them, especially the yellow-back, with disfavour. He is a Swedenborgian—our little port, like most, is rich in out-of-the-way religions—and presumably regards all modern literature as on the wrong tack. It was not until we had parted with him at the Martello tower that we dared open our books.

Selina had grabbed Patty's, the yellow-back, but she soon laid it down, and made a face. "My dear Patty," she said wearily, "how *can* you go on reading Gyp? Don't you see that the silly woman doesn't even know how to tell her own silly stories?"

Patty slightly flushed. She knew Gyp was a countess and great-granddaughter of Mirabeau-Tonneau, and felt it was almost Bolshevist manners to call so well-born a woman silly. Nothing could have been more frigid than her "What on earth do you mean, Selina?"

" I mean," said Selina, " that the poor woman is dreadfully *vieux jeu*. I'm not thinking of her social puppets, her vicious clubmen, her languid swells, her anti-Semite Hebrews, her fashionable ladies who are no better than they should be though, goodness knows, these are old-fashioned enough. She began making them before I was born." (Selina is no chicken, but it was horrid of Patty to raise her eyebrows.) " What I mean is, that she is at the old worn-out game of playing the omniscient author. Here she is telling you not only what Josette said and did when La Réole attacked her, but what La Réole said and did when Josette had left him, and so on. She ' goes behind ' everybody, tells you what is inside everybody's head. Why can't she take her point of view, and stick to it. Wasn't her obvious point of view Josette's ? Then she should have told us nothing about the other people but what Josette could know or divine about them."

" Ah, Selina," I interrupted, " your ' goes behind ' gives you away. You've been reading Henry James's letters."

" Like everybody else," she snapped.

" Why, to be sure, oh Jacobite Selina, but one may read them without taking their æsthetics for law and gospel. I know that the dear man lectured Mrs. Humphry Ward about the ' point of view,' when she was writing ' Elinor,' and got, I fancy, rather a tart answer for his pains. But you are more intransigent than the master. For he admitted

that the point of view was all according to circumstances, and that some circumstances—for instance, a big canvas—made 'omniscience' inevitable. What about Balzac and Tolstoy? Both took the omniscient line, and, as novelists, are not exactly to be sneezed at."

"Yes, but Gyp's isn't a big canvas," said Selina "and it seems to me *n'en déplaise à votre seigneurie*, that this precious story of hers called aloud for Josette's point of view, and nothing but Josette's. She is the one decent woman in the book, according to Gyp's queer standards of decency" (Patty sniffed), "and the whole point, so far as I can make out, is the contrast of her decent mind with the highly indecent people round her. She is as innocent as Maisie, but a Maisie grown up and married. What a chance for another 'What Maisie knew'!"

"I only wish *I* knew what you two are talking about," pouted Patty.

"That is not necessary, dear child," I said, in my best avuncular manner. "You are a Maisie yourself—a Maisie who reads French novels. But, Selina, dear, look at your own Henry James's own practice. He didn't always choose his point of view and stick to it. He chose two in 'The Golden Bowl,' and three in 'The Wings of the Dove,' and I'm hanged if I know whether he took several, or none at all, in 'The Awkward Age.'"

"Well," rejoined Selina, "and isn't that just why those books don't quite come off? Don't you feel

that ' The Golden Bowl ' is not one book but two, and that ' The Wings ' is almost as kaleidoscopic " (Patty gasped) " as ' The Ring and the Book ' ? I mentioned ' Maisie,' but after all that was a *tour de force*, it seemed to have been done for a wager. If you challenge me to give you real perfection, why, take ' The Ambassadors ' and ' The Spoils of Poynton.' Was ever the point of view held more tight ? Everything seen through Strether's eyes, everything through Fleda's ! "

" Oh, I grant you the success of the method there, but, dear Selina " (I had lit my pipe and felt equal to out-arguing a non-smoker in the long run), " let us distinguish." (Patty strolled away with her Gyp while we distinguished.) " The method of Henry James was good for Henry James. What was the ruling motive of his people ? Curiosity about one another's minds. Now, if he had just told us their minds, straightway, by ' getting behind ' each of them in turn, in the ' omniscient ' style, there would have been no play of curiosity, no chance for it even to begin, the cat would have been out of the bag. By putting his point of view inside one of his people and steadily keeping it fixed there, he turns all the other people into mere appearances—just as other people are for each one of us in real life. We have to guess and to infer what is in their minds, we make mistakes and correct them ; sometimes they purposely mislead us. This is rather a nuisance, perhaps, in the real world of action where our

curiosity must have a ' business end ' to it ; but it is (for those who like it, as you and I do, Selina) immense fun in the world of fiction."

" Now," interjected Selina, " you are talking ! That is precisely my case."

" Stop a minute, Selina. I said the method was good for the writer whose temperament it suited. But so are other methods for other temperaments. You may tell your story all in letters, if you are a Richardson, or with perpetual digressions and statements that you are telling a story, if you are a Fielding or a Thackeray, or autobiographically, if your autobiography is a ' Copperfield ' or a ' Kidnapped.' Every author, I suggest, is a law to himself. And I see no reason why we should bar ' omniscience,' as you apparently want to. Why forbid the novelist the historian's privilege ? Why rule out the novel which is a history of imaginary facts ? "

" I can't quite see Gyp as a historian," said Selina.

" No more can I, thank goodness," said Patty.

And so we were rowed back to the jetty, and the blue eyes didn't blink over half-a-crown under the very notice board.

AGAIN AT THE MARTELLO TOWER

Now that regattas are over and oysters have come in again, our little port has returned to its normal or W. W. Jacobs demeanour. The bathers on the sand-spit have struck their tents. The Salvation Army band is practising its winter repertory. When our blue-eyed boatman rowed us over to the Martello tower again the other day, he almost looked as though he expected little more than his legal fare. Selina, who has the gift of management, suggested that Patty should try it on with him, on the ground, first, that women always do these things better than men, and, second, that Patty was blue-eyes' favourite. I acquiesced, and Patty borrowed half-a-crown of me, so as to be prepared when the time came.

Meanwhile Selina began to read us extracts from Professor Henri Bergson on "Laughter." Selina is a serious person without, so far as I have ever discovered, a grain of humour in her composition. These are just the people who read theories of laughter. It is a mystery to them, and they desire to have it explained. "A laughable expression of the face," began Selina, "is one that will make us think of something rigid and, so to speak, coagulated, in the wonted mobility of the face. What we shall see will be an ingrained twitching or a fixed grimace. One

would say that the person's whole moral life has crystallized into this particular cast of features."

"I wonder whether Mr. George Robey's whole moral life has," dropped Patty, innocently.

"And who, pray," said Selina, with her heavy eyebrows making semi-circles of indignant surprise, "is Mr. George Robey?"

I sat silent. I had just brought my niece back from a short but variegated stay in town. I knew, but I would not tell.

"Why, Selina, dear," answered Patty, "you are the very image of him with your eyebrows rounded like that. He is always glaring at the audience that way."

"*Will* you, Patty," said Selina, now thoroughly roused, "be good enough to tell me who he *is?*"

"Well, he's an actor, who makes the very faces your Bergson describes. Uncle took me to see him in a" (catching my warning eye)—"in a sort of historical play. He was Louis XV., at Versailles, you know."

"H'm," said Selina, "it's rather a doubtful period; and the very best historical plays do make such a hash of history. Was it in blank verse? Blank verse will do much to mitigate the worst period."

"N-no," answered Patty, "I don't think it was in blank verse. I didn't notice; did you, Uncle?"

I tried to prevaricate. "Well, you never know about blank verse on the stage nowadays, nearly all

the actors turn it into prose. Mr. Robey may have been speaking blank verse, as though it were prose. The best artists cannot escape the fashion of the moment, you know."

"But what did he do?" insisted Selina, "What was the action of the play?"

Patty considered. "I don't remember his doing anything, Selina, dear, but chuck the ladies of the Court under the chin. Oh, yes, and he made eyes at them affectionately."

"A pretty sort of historical play, on my word!" exclaimed Selina.

"Oh, it wasn't *all* historical, Selina, dear," said Patty, sweetly. "A lot of it was thoroughly modern, and Mr. Robey wore a frock coat, and such a funny little bowler hat, and another time he was a street musician in Venice with a stuffed monkey pinned to his coat-tails."

Selina looked at me. There was a silent pause that would have made anybody else feel uncomfortable, but I was equal to the occasion. I snatched Selina's book out of her hand, and said, cheerfully, "You see, Selina, it's all explained here. Wonderful fellow, Bergson. 'Something mechanical encrusted upon the living,' that's the secret of the comic. Depend upon it, he had seen George Robey and the stuffed monkey. And if Bergson, who's a tremendous swell, member of the institute, and all that, why not Patty and I?"

"And where," asked Selina, with a rueful glance

at the Bergson book, as though she began to distrust theories of the comic, " where was this precious performance ? "

" At the Alhambra," answered Patty, simply.

" The Alhambra ! I remember Chateaubriand once visited it," said Selina, who is nothing if not literary, " but I didn't know it was the haunt of philosophers."

I looked as though it was, but Patty tactlessly broke in, " Oh, I wish you two wouldn't talk about philosophers. Can't one laugh at Mr. Robey without having him explained by Bergson ? Anyhow, I don't believe he can explain Mr. Nelson Keys."

" Another of your historical actors ? " inquired Selina with some bitterness.

" Yes, Selina, dear, and much more historical than Mr. Robey. He played Beau Brummell and they were all there, Fox and Sheridan and the Prince of Wales, you know, all out of your favourite Creevey, and they said ' egad ' and ' la ' and ' monstrous fine,' and bowed and congee'd like anything—oh, it was awfully historical."

Selina, a great reader of memoirs, was a little mollified. " Come," she said, " this is better—though the Regency is another dangerous period. I'm glad, however, that Londoners seem to be looking to the theatre for a little historical instruction."

" Yes, Selina," I said, feeling that it would be dangerous to let Patty speak just at that moment, " and there is a certain type of contemporary play,

called *revue*, which recognizes that demand and seldom, if ever, fails to cater for it. In *revues* I have renewed acquaintance with the heroes of classical antiquity, with prominent crusaders, with Queen Elizabeth, with the Grand Monarque—a whole course of history, in fact. Let Bergson explain that, if he can. And, what is more wonderful still, our *revue* artists, whose talent is usually devoted to provoking laughter, seem willingly to forgo it for the honour of appearing as an historical personage. Mr. Robey and Mr. Keys, I should tell you, are both professional laughter-provokers, indeed are the heads of their profession, yet one is content to posture as Louis Quinze and the other as Beau Brummell without any real chance of being funny. So the past ever exerts its prestige over us. So the muse of history still weaves her spell."

"Which was the muse of history, Patty, dear?" said Selina, whose equanimity was now happily restored.

"Oh, bother, I forget," said Patty, "and, anyhow, I don't think she has as much to do with *revues* as uncle pretends. Give me the real muse of *revue* who inspired Mr. Keys with his German waiter and his Spanish mandolinist and his Japanese juggler and——"

"This," I said, to put an end to Patty's indiscreet prattle, "must be the muse of geography."

Patty gave me no change out of my half-crown. The boatman said he didn't happen to have any. So much for Selina's management!

THE SILENT STAGE

The spoken drama and the silent stage. I came across this dichotomy in *The Times* the other day, not without a pang, for it was a day too late. It is not a true dichotomy. It does not distinguish accurately between the story told by living actors to our faces and the story told by successive photographs of such actors. For the "silent stage" would cover pantomime, a form of drama, and a very ancient form, acted by living actors. It is not true, but it is for practical uses true enough. In life we have to make the best of rough approximations. I would have used this one gratefully had it occurred to me in my moment of need. But it did not.

Let me explain. One of our more notable comedians (I purposely put it thus vaguely, partly out of discretion, partly with a bid for that interest which the mystery of anonymity is apt to confer upon an otherwise matter-of-fact narrative, as George Borrow well knew)—one of our most notable comedians, then, had asked me to accompany him to a "cinema" rehearsal wherein he was cast for the principal part. I eagerly accepted, because the art of the "cinema" is becoming so important in our daily life that one really ought to learn something

about it, and, moreover, because the *cuisine* of any art (see the Diary of the De Goncourts *passim*) is a fascinating thing in itself. Our rehearsal was to be miles away, in the far East of London, and the mere journey was a geographical adventure. The scene was a disused factory, and a disused factory has something of the romantic melancholy of a disaffected cathedral—not the romance of ruins, but the romance of a fabric still standing and valid, but converted to alien uses.

Our first question on arrival was, were we late? This question seems to be a common form of politeness with notable comedians, and is probably designed to take the wind out of the sails of possible criticism. No, we were not late—though everybody seemed to be suspiciously ready and, one feared, waiting. They were a crowd of ladies and gentlemen in elaborate evening dress, all with faces painted a rich *café au lait* or else salmon-colour, and very odd such a crowd looked against the whitewashed walls and bare beams of the disused factory. The scenery looked even more odd. It presented the middle fragments of everything without any edges. There was a vast baronial hall, decorated with suits of armour and the heaviest furniture, but without either ceiling or walls. There was a staircase hung, so to speak, in the air, leading to a doorway, which was just the framework of a door, standing alone, let into nothing. It seemed uncanny, until you remembered the simple fact that the camera can

cover just as much, or as little, of a scene as it chooses. Great glaring " cinema " lights—I had not seen them since the Beckett-Carpentier fight—cast an unearthly pallor upon the few unpainted faces. The crowd of painted ladies and gentlemen hung about, waiting for their scene with what seemed to me astonishing patience. But patience, I suspect, is a necessary virtue at all rehearsals, whether " spoken " or " silent."

And that distinction brings me to the producer. It was for him that I should have liked to have thought of it. For he fell to talking to me about his art, the art of production, and of cinematography in general, and I found myself forced to make some comparisons with what I had, up to that moment, always thought of as the " regular " stage. But evidently, as Jeffery said of Wordsworth's poem, this would never do. The producer might have thought I was reflecting upon his art, about which he was so enthusiastic, as something " irregular." At last, after deplorable hesitation, I found my phrase—the " other " stage. Dreadfully tame, I admit, but safe ; it hurt nobody. Even now, however, I have an uneasy feeling that the producer was not quite satisfied with it. I ought perhaps to have accompanied it with a shrug, some sign of apology for so much as recognizing the existence of " other " stages, of anything else, in short, than what was, at that moment and on that spot, *the* stage, the " silent " stage, the stage of moving pictures. It was like

speaking of Frith's "Derby Day" in the presence of a Cubist. Artistic enthusiasts must be allowed their little exclusions.

If the producer was an enthusiast, there was certainly a method in his enthusiasm. His table was covered with elaborate geometrical drawings, which, I was told, were first sketches for successive scenes. On pegs hung little schedules of the artists required for each scene, and of the scenes wherein each of the principals was concerned. Innumerable photographs, of course—photographs of scenes actually represented on the "film," and of others not represented, experiments for the actual, final thing. For it is to be remembered that the producer of a "film" is relatively more important than the producer of a "spoken drama." He is always part, and sometimes whole, author of the play. He has to conceive the successive phases of the action in detail, and to conceive them in terms of photography. Even with some one else's play as a datum he has, I take it, to invent a good deal. For while the "spoken drama" can only show selected, critical moments of life, the "silent stage" aims at continuity and gives you the intervening moments. On the one stage, when a lady makes an afternoon call, you see her hostess's drawing-room, and she walks in; on the other stage you see her starting from home, jumping into her Rolls-Royce, dashing through the crowded streets, knocking at the front door, being relieved of her cloak by the flunkey, mounting the stairs to the

drawing-room, etc., etc. Indeed, this mania for continuity is a besetting sin of the "silent stage"; it leads to sheer irrelevance and the ruin of all proportion. My enthusiastic producer, it is only fair to say, was far too good an artist to approve it.

"At the first whistle, get ready," shouted the producer, "at the second, slow waltz, please." And then the baronial hall was filled by the crowd of exemplary patience and they danced with unaffected enjoyment, these gay people, just as though no camera were directed on them. The heroine appeared (she was the daughter of the house, and this was her first ball—indicated by a stray curl down her back), and her ravishing pink gown, evidently a choice product of the West-end, looked strange in a disused East-end factory. Of course she had adopted the inexorable "cinema" convention of a "Cupid's bow" mouth. Here is the youngest of the arts already fast breeding its own conventions. Surely the variety of female lips might be recognized! Women's own mouths are generally prettier, and certainly more suitable to their faces, than some rigidly fixed type. It would be ungallant to say that the leading lady's "Cupid's bow" did not become her, but the shape of her own mouth, I venture to suggest, would have been better still. And where was my friend the notable comedian all this time? Rigging himself out in evening clerical dress for the ball (he was the vicar of the parish), and

evidently regarding his momentary deviation into " film " work (for the benefit of a theatrical charity) as great fun. Will the heroes of the " silent stage," I wonder, ever deviate into " spoken drama " ? It would be startling to hear Charlie Chaplin speak.

THE MOVIES

All is dark and an excellent orchestra is playing a Beethoven symphony. The attendant flashes you to your seat with her torch, you tumble over a subaltern, and murmur to yourself, with Musset's Fantasio, "Quelles solitudes que tous ces corps humains!" For that is the first odd thing that strikes you about the movies; the psychology of the audience is not collective, but individual. You are not aware of your neighbour, who is shrouded from your gaze, and you take your pleasure alone. Thus you are rid of the "contagion of the crowd," the claims of human sympathy, the imitative impulse, and thrown in upon yourself, a hermit at the mercy of the hallucinations that beset the solitary. You never applaud, for that is a collective action. What with the soothing flow of the music, the darkness, and the fact that your eye is fixed on one bright spot, you are in the ideal condition for hypnotism. But the suspected presence of others, vague shadows hovering near you, give your mood the last touch of the uncanny. You are a prisoner in Plato's cave or in some crepuscular solitude of Maeterlinck. Anything might happen.

According to the programme what happens is

called *The Prodigal Wife*. Her husband is a doctor and she pines for gaiety while he is busy at the hospital. It is her birthday and he has forgotten to bring her her favourite roses, which are in fact offered to her by another gentleman with more leisure and a better memory. Our own grievance against the husband, perhaps capricious, is his appalling straw hat—but then we equally dislike the lover's tail-coat, so matters are even, and the lady's preference of No. 2 to No. 1 seems merely arbitrary. Anyhow, she goes off with No. 2 in a motor-car, "all out," leaving the usual explanatory letter behind her, which is thrown on the screen for all of us to gloat over.

Here let me say that this profuse exhibition on the screen of all the correspondence in the case, letters, telegrams, copies of verses, last wills and testaments, the whole *dossier*, strikes me as a mistake. It under-values the intelligence of the audience, which is quite capable of guessing what people are likely to write in the given circumstances without being put to the indelicacy of reading it. As it is, you no sooner see some one handling a scrap of paper than you know you are going to have the wretched scrawl thrust under your nose. As if we didn't know all about these things! As if it wouldn't be pleasanter to leave the actual text to conjecture! I remember in *Rebellious Susan* there is a packet of compromising letters shown to interested parties, whose vague comments, "Well, after *that*," etc.,

sufficiently enlighten us without anything further. But now, when Lady Macbeth reads her lord's letter, up it goes on the screen, blots and all. This is an abuse of the film, which finds it easier to exhibit a letter than to explain why it came to be written. As things are, the lady seems to have eloped in a hurry without sufficient grounds. No. 2 presents his roses, and, hey presto! the car is round the corner. No. 1 takes it very nobly, hugs his abandoned babe to his bosom, and pulls long faces (obligingly brought nearer the camera to show the furrows). The mother's sin shall ever be hidden from the innocent child, and to see the innocent child innocently asking, "Where's muvver?" and being answered with sad headshakes from the bereaved parent (now bang against the camera) is to bathe in sentimental photography up to the neck.

Thereafter the innocent child grows like (and actually inside) a rosebud till, as the petals fall off, she is revealed as a buxom young woman—the familiar photographic trick of showing one thing *through* another being here turned to something like poetic advantage. But then the film again bolts with the theme. There is running water and a boat, things which no film can resist. Away go the girl and her sweetheart on a river excursion, loosening the painter, jumping in, shoving off, performing, in short, every antic which in photography can be compassed with a stream and a boat. We have forgotten all about the prodigal wife. But here she

is again, her hair in grey *bandeaux* and her lips, as the relentless camera shows you at short range, rouged with a hard outline. She has returned to her old home as the family nurse. For there is now another innocent babe, the doctor's grandchild, to wax and wane with the advancing and receding camera, and to have its little "nightie" blown realistically by the usual wind as it stands on the stair-head. The doctor himself is as busy as ever, making wonderful pharmacological discoveries (newspaper extracts exhibited on the screen) in a laboratory blouse and dictating the results (notes shown on the screen) to an enterprising reporter.

And here there is another "rushed" elopement. "The art of drama," said Dumas, "is the art of preparations." But nothing has prepared us (save, perhaps, heredity) for the sudden freak of the prodigal wife's daughter in running away with a lover so vague that you see only his hat (another hideous straw—*il ne manquait que ca !*) and the glow of his cigarette-end. Family nurse to the rescue! Tender expostulations, reminders about the innocent babe, and nick-of-time salvation of the "intending" runaway. Ultimate meeting of nurse and doctor; he is all forgiveness, but prodigal wives are not to be forgiven like that. No, she must go out into the snow, and you see her walking down the long path, dwindling, dwindling, from a full-sized nurse into a Euclidean point.

To sum up. The camera would do better if it

would learn self-denial and observe the law of artistic economy, keep its people consistently in one plane and out of boats and motor cars, *soigner* its crises a little more, and avoid publishing correspondence. And it should slacken its pace a bit. You may take the Heraclitean philosophy—πάντα χωρεῖ—a little too literally. The movies would be all the more moving for moving slower.

For the real fun of rapid motion, appropriately used, give me *Mutt and Jeff*. Mutt, buried in the sand, with a head like an egg, prompts an ostrich to lay another egg, from which emerges a brood of little ostriches. Jeff goes out to shoot them, but his shots glance off in harmless wreaths of smoke. When Mutt and Jeff exchange ideas you see them actually travelling like an electric spark along the wire, from brain to brain. The ostrich hoists Mutt out of the sand by the breeches. Collapse of Jeff. It suggests a drawing by Caran d'Ache in epileptic jerks. The natural history pictures, too, the deer and the birds, strike one as admirable examples of what animated photography can do for us in the way of instruction as well as amusement. . . . And the orchestra has been playing all this time, Beethoven and Mozart, a " separate ecstasy." And again I stumble over the subaltern, and wonder to find people moving so slowly in Piccadilly Circus.

TIME AND THE FILM

THERE was a gentleman in Molière, frequently mentioned since and now for my need to be unblushingly mentioned again, who said to another gentleman, about never mind what, that *le temps ne fait rien à l'affaire.* But Molière belonged to that effete art the "spoken drama," which we learn, from America, has sunk to be used mainly as an advertisement of the play which is subsequently to be filmed out of it. He wrote in the dark or pre-film ages, and could not know what an all-important part *le temps* was to play in *l'affaire* of the film. Among its innumerable and magnificent activities the film is an instructor of youth, and it seems, from a letter which the Rev. Dr. Lyttelton has written to *The Times,* it instructs at a pace which is a little too quick for the soaring human boy. "Elephants," the reverend Doctor pathetically complains, "are shown scuttling about like antelopes," and so the poor boy mixes up antelopes and elephants and gets his zoology all wrong. I should myself have innocently supposed that this magical acceleration of pace is one of the great charms of the film for the boy. It not only provides him with half-a-dozen pictures in the time it would have taken him to read

one of them in print (to say nothing of his being saved the trouble of reading, learning the alphabet, and other pedagogic nuisances altogether), but it offers him something much more exciting and romantic than his ordinary experience. He knows that at the Zoo elephants move slowly, but here on the film they are taught, in the American phrase, to " step lively," and are shown scuttling about like antelopes. A world wherein the ponderous and slow elephant is suddenly endowed by the magician's wand with the lightness and rapidity of the antelope —what entrancement for boys, aye, and for grown-ups too !

Indeed, it seems to me that the greatest achievement of the film is its triumph over time. Some amateurs may find its chief charm in the perfect " Cupid's bow " of its heroines' mouths ; others in the remarkable English prose of its explanatory accompaniments ; others, again, in its exquisite humour of protagonists smothered in flour or soap-lather or flattened under runaway motor-cars. I admit the irresistible fascination of these delights and can quite understand how they come to be preferred to the high-class opera company which has been introduced at the Capitol, New York, to entertain " between pictures." But I still think the prime merit of the film—the real reason for which last year more than enough picture films to encircle the earth at the Equator left the United States of America for foreign countries—lies in its ability to

play as it will with time. The mere acceleration of pace (which is the ordinary game it plays)—the fierce galloping of horses across prairies, the miraculous speed of motor-cars, elephants scuttling about like antelopes—gives a sharp sense of exhilaration, of victory over sluggish nature. And even here there is an educational result that ought to console Dr. Lyttelton. The rate of plant growth is multiplied thousands of times so that we are enabled actually to see the plants growing, expanding from bud to flower under our eyes. But there is also the retardation of pace, which is even more wonderful. A diver is shown plunging into the water and swimming at a rate which allows the minutest movement of the smallest muscle to be clearly seen. This is an entirely beautiful thing; but I should suppose that the film, by its power of exhibiting movements naturally too quick for the eye at whatever slower rate is desired, must have extraordinary use for scientific investigations. This, at any rate, is a better use for the film than that sometimes claimed for it in the field of morality. I look with suspicion on those films, as I do on those "spoken" plays, that propose to do us good by exhibiting the details of this or that "social evil." Some philanthropic societies, I believe, have introduced such pictures in all good faith. But many of their producers are, like the others, merely out to make money, and in every case I imagine their patrons to be drawn to them not by any moral impulse, but by a prurient

curiosity—the desire to have a peep into the forbidden.

But to return to the question of time. It has its importance, too, in the "spoken drama," but it ceases to be a question of visible pace. You cannot make real men and women scuttle about like antelopes. You can only play tricks with the clock. The act-drop is invaluable for getting your imaginary time outstripping your real time :—

> jumping o'er times,
> Turning the accomplishment of many years
> Into an hour-glass.

In a moment it bridges over for you the gap between youth and age, as in *Sweethearts*. But there is another way of playing tricks with the clock, by making it stand still for some of your personages, while it ticks regularly for the rest. A. E. W. Mason, in one of his stories, gave an extra quarter of an hour now and then to one of the characters—that is to say, the clock stopped for them during that period, but not for him—and while *outside* time, so to speak, he could do all sorts of things (if I remember rightly he committed a murder) without risk of detection. But the great magician of this kind is Barrie. The heroine of his *Truth about the Russian Dancers* had a sudden desire for an infant, and within a half-hour was delivered of one ; a remarkably rapid case of *parthenogenesis*. The infant was carried out and returned the next moment a child of ten. "He grows apace," said somebody.

These were cases of the clock galloping. With the heroine of *Mary Rose* on the island it stands still, so that she returns twenty-five years later to her family precisely the same girl as she left them. We all know what pathetic effects Barrie gets out of this trick with the clock. But he has, of course, to assume supernatural intervention to warrant them. And there you have the contrast with the film. In the " spoken drama," poor, decrepit old thing, they appeal to that silly faculty, the human imagination ; whereas the film has only to turn some wheels quicker or slower and it is all done for you, under your nose, without any imagination at all. Elephants are scuttling about like antelopes and divers plunging into the water at a snail's pace. No wonder that, according to our New York advices, " film magnates have made so much money that they have been able to buy chains of theatres throughout the country," and that " everybody talks films in the United States."

FUTURIST DANCING

That amazing propagandist, Signor Marinetti, of Milan, who favours me from time to time with his manifestos, now sends "La Danse Futuriste." I confess that I have not a ha'porth of Futurism in my composition. I am what Signor Marinetti would himself call a Passéiste, a mere Pastist. Hence I have generally failed to discover any meaning in these manifestos, and have thrown them into the waste-paper basket. But as the present one happens to arrive at the same time as another Futurist tract—Signor Ardengo Soffici's "Estetica Futurista"—I have read the two together, to see if one throws any light on the other. It is right to say that "the" Soffici (to adopt an Italianism) disclaims any connexion with "the" Marinetti, explaining that he puts forward a doctrine, whereas official Futurism has no doctrine, but only manifestos. It couldn't have, he rather unkindly adds, seeing that its very nature is "anticultural and instinctolatrous." (Rather jolly, don't you think, the rich and varied vocabulary of these Italian gentlemen?) Nevertheless, I have ventured to study one document by the light of the other; and, if the result is only to make darkness visible, it is a

certain gain, after all, to get anything visible in such a matter.

And first for the Marinetti. His manifesto begins by taking an historical survey of dancing through the ages. The earliest dances, he points out, reflected the terror of humanity at the unknown and the incomprehensible in the Cosmos. Thus round dances were rhythmical pantomimes reproducing the rotatory movement of the stars. The gestures of the Catholic priest in the celebration of Mass imitate these early dances and contain the same astronomical symbol—a statement calculated to provoke devout Catholics to fury. (I should like to hear the learned author of " The Golden Bough " on the anthropological side of it.) Then came the lascivious dances of the East, and their modern Parisian counterpart—or sham imitation. For this he gives a quasi-mathematical formula in the familiar Futurist style. " Parisian red pepper + buckler + lance + ecstasy before idols signifying nothing + nothing + undulation of Montmartre hips = erotic Pastist anachronism for tourists." Golly, what a formula !

Before the war Paris went crazy over dances from South America : the Argentine *tango*, the Chilean *zamacueca*, the Brazilian *maxixe*, the Paraguayan *santafé*. Compliments to Diaghileff, Nijinsky (" the pure geometry " of dancing), and Isadora Duncan, " whose art has many points of contact with impressionism in painting, just as Nijinsky's has with the

forms and masses of Cézanne." Under the influence of Cubist experiments, and particularly under the influence of Picasso, dancing became an autonomous art. It was no longer subject to music, but took its place. Kind words for Dalcroze ; but " we Futurists prefer Loie Fuller and the nigger cake-walk (utilization of electric light and machinery)." Machinery's the thing ! " We must have gestures imitating the movements of motors, pay assiduous court to wings, wheels, pistons, prepare the fusion of man and machine, and so arrive at the metallism of Futurist dancing. Music is fundamentally nostalgic, and on that account rarely of any use in Futurist dancing. Noise, caused by friction and shock of solid bodies, liquids, or high-pressure gases, has become one of the most dynamic elements of Futurist poesy. Noise is the language of the new human-mechanical life." So Futurist dancing will be accompanied by " organized noises " and the orchestra of " noise-makers " invented by Luigi Russolo. Finally, Futurist dancing will be :—

Inharmonious — Ungraceful — Asymmetrical — Dynamic—*Motlibriste.*

All this, of course, is as plain as a pikestaff. The Futurist aim is simply to run counter to tradition, to go by rule of contrary, to say No when everybody for centuries has been saying Yes, and Yes when everybody has been saying No. But when it comes to putting this principle into practice we see at once there are limitations. Thus, take the

Marinetti's first example, the " Aviation " dance. The dancer will dance on a big map (which would have pleased the late Lord Salisbury). She must be a continual palpitation of azure veils. On her breast she will wear a (celluloid) screw, and for her hat a model monoplane. She will dance before a succession of screens, bearing the announcements 300 metres, 500 metres, etc. She will leap over a heap of green stuffs (indicating a mountain). " Organized noises " will imitate rain and wind and continual interruptions of the electric light will simulate lightning, while the dancer will jump through hoops of pink paper (sunset) and blue paper (night). And so forth.

Was there ever such a lame and impotent conclusion ? The new dancing, so pompously announced, proves to be nothing but the crude symbolism to be seen already in every Christmas pantomime—nay, in every village entertainment or " vicar's treat." And we never guessed, when our aunts took us to see the good old fun, that we were witnessing something dynamic and *motlibriste !*

I turn to the Soffici. He finds the philosophy of Futurism in the clown, because the clown's supreme wisdom is to run counter to common sense. " The universe has no meaning outside the fireworks of phenomena—say the tricks and acts and jokes of the clown. Your problems, your systems, are absurd, dear sirs ; all's one and nothing counts save the sport of the imagination. Let us away with

our ergotism, with the lure of reason, let us abandon ourselves entirely to the frenzy of innovations that provoke wonder." It is this emancipation, adds the Soffici, this artificial creation of a lyric reality independent of the *nexus* of natural manifestations and appearances, this gay symbolism, that our æsthetic puts forward as the aim for the new artist.

Well, we have seen how gay was the symbolism devised by the Marinetti. And how inadequate, how poor in invention. Dancing that has to be eked out by labelled screens and paper hoops and pyramids of stuffs ! That is what we get from the new artist. The old artists had a different way ; when they had to symbolize, they did it by *dancing*, without extraneous aid. When Karsavina symbolized golf, she required no " property " but a golf-ball. All the rest was the light fantastic toe. When Genée symbolized Cinderella's kitchen drudgery, she just seized a broom and danced, divinely, with it. But that was before the Marinetti made his grand discovery that music is too nostalgic for dancing purposes and that the one thing needful is organized noise—as organized by Luigi Russolo. . . . No, it is no use trying ; I remain an incorrigible Pastist.

HROSWITHA

WRITING about Hroswitha's *Callimachus*, as performed by the Art Theatre, I touched upon the unintentionally comic aspect of a tenth-century miracle play to a twentieth-century audience. Naturally this is not an aspect of the matter which recommends itself to a lady who is about to publish a translation of Hroswitha's plays with a preface by a cardinal, and in a published letter she protests that the fun which the Art Theatre got out of *Callimachus* was not justified by the text. Let me hasten to acquit the Art Theatre of the misdemeanour attributed to it by Miss Christopher St. John. There was nothing intentionally funny in its performance. The players acted their parts with all possible simplicity and sincerity. The smiling was all on our side of the footlights. But I said that the smile was "reverent," because of the sacred nature of the subject-matter.

This opens up the question of the frame of mind in which we moderns ought to approach works of "early" art. The first effort of a critic—we must all be agreed about that—should be to put himself, imaginatively, in the artist's place. He has to try to think himself back into the time, the place, the

circumstances of the work, and into the artist's temperament, intentions, and means of execution. We look at the Madonna of Cimabue in the church of Santa Maria Novella, and our first impulse is to find her ungainly, uncouth, without spiritual significance. It is only by thinking ourselves back among the Florentines of the thirteenth century that we can understand and appreciate Cimabue's appeal. But consider how difficult—or, rather, impossible—that thinking-back process is. Consider what we have to unlearn. We have to make ourselves as though we had never seen the Sistine Madonna of Raphael; much more than that, we have mentally to wipe out six centuries of human history. Manifestly it cannot be done; we can never see the Cimabue picture as Cimabue himself saw it or as his Florentine contemporaries saw it. We have to try; but what we shall at best succeed in attaining is a palimpsest, the superimposition of new artistic interpretation on the old. And when we say that classics are immortal, we only mean that they are capable of yielding a perpetual series of fresh palimpsests, of being perpetually "hatched again and hatched different." We cannot see Dante's *Commedia* as Dante or Dante's first readers saw it. For us its politics are dead and its theology grotesque; it lives for us now by its spirituality, its majesty, and the beauty of its form. But with works that are not classics, works that are not susceptible of a perpetual rebirth, the case is even

harder. They are inscriptions that we can no longer decipher; we cannot think ourselves, for a moment, back in the mind of the author. They have become for us curios.

And that is what Hroswitha's *Callimachus* has become: a curio. How can we put ourselves back in the mind of a nun in the Convent of Gandersheim in the age of Otho the Great? I say "we." For nuns perhaps (having, I assume, a mentality nearer the tenth century than the rest of us) may take a fair shot at it. So, too, may cardinals, whose august mentality I do not presume to fathom. But it is certain that common worldly men, mere average playgoers, cannot do it.

But, it will be objected, are we not, or most of us, still Christians? Are we not still capable of understanding prayers, miracles, saintliness, raising from the dead, "conversion," and all the other subject-matter of *Callimachus?* To be sure we are; hence my "reverent" smile. If Christianity were dead (or, as in Swift's ironical pamphlet, abolished by Act of Parliament) *Callimachus* would be simply meaningless for us, a nothing, mere mummery. It is not the matter of the play that provokes our smile; but its form. The "fun," says Miss St. John, is "not justified by the text." She is thinking of the matter, abounding in piety and tending to edification; but in point of fact the language, the "text" —at any rate in theatrical representation (far be it from me to prejudice her forthcoming book)—has

its comic side. Callimachus's abrupt declaration of his passion to Drusiana and the terms of her rejection of him are both, to a modern audience, irresistibly comic. They are not meaningless, but they are delightfully impossible: they are love-making as imagined by a nun, the very person who *ex hypothesi* knows nothing about it. You have, in fact, precisely the same delicious absurdity, proceeding from an imagination necessarily uninstructed by experience, as you get in Miss Daisy Ashford's book. (Several critics have made this comparison. I am really chagrined not to have thought of it myself. But it should show Miss St. John that I am, at any rate, not the only one who found *Callimachus* comic.)

Further, and quite apart from the exquisite naïveties of its text, the form of the play is so childlike and bland as to be really funny. The players, when not engaged in the action, stand motionless in a semi-circle. Changes of scene are indicated by two performers crossing the stage in opposite directions—a genuine cricket "over." Characters are understood to be stricken with death when they composedly lie down on their backs. Others trot in pairs round Drusiana's prostrate form and you understand they are journeying to her tomb. All this, of course, is merely primitive "convention." Could we put ourselves back into Hroswitha's time, it would pass unnoticed. In our own time, with a different set of "conventions," that make some attempt at imitation of reality, we

naturally laugh at these old conventions. We laugh, but we are interested ; our curiosity is being catered for, we like to see what the old conventions were. The curio, in short, is amusing in the fullest sense of the term.

And it leaves us with a desire to know more about Hroswitha, the " white rose " of the tenth century (if that be really the meaning of her name). Perhaps the Cardinal's preface will tell us more. One remark occurs. It seems a little significant that a nun should have written all her plays on the one theme of chastity. It must have been an obsession with her, this virtue to which, as Renan said, nature attaches so little importance. And, in hunting her theme, this nun does not scruple to pursue it to the strangest places. She even puts courtesans upon the stage and houses of ill-fame. How on earth did the good lady imagine these unconventual topics? The question suggests some puzzles about the psychology of nuns. But one only has to see *Callimachus* to know that Hroswitha must have been as pure as snow, or as a white rose, as innocently ignorant, in fact, of what she was writing about as Miss Daisy Ashford when she described an elopement.

PAGELLO

Long before *Madame Sand* was produced at the Duke of York's Theatre more had been written all the world over about the trip of George Sand and Alfred de Musset to Venice in 1833–4 than about the decline and fall of the Roman Empire or the campaigns of the Great War. A heavy fine should be imposed on any one who needlessly adds a drop of ink to the vast mass of controversy that has raged round that subject, and I promise to leave the main story, which must be known to every adult man and woman in the two hemispheres, severely alone. But there is a subordinate actor in the story, to whom injustice, I think, has been done on all hands, and whose case it would be an act of the merest decency to reconsider. I mean Pietro Pagello.

His case was prejudiced from the first by the dissemination of an atrocious libel. When a patient alleges scandalous behaviour between doctor and nurse, it is well to be sure of the witness's mental condition. Now Musset was suffering, not, as Pagello politely put it, from typhoid fever, but from *delirium tremens*. This would at once disqualify him as an eye-witness. But the fact is Musset himself never made the allegation ; the story was spread about by

brother Paul, a terrible liar. Pagello had been called in first to attend not Alfred, but George herself, for severe headache. Half a century later he remembered that her lips were thick and ugly, and her teeth discoloured by the cigarettes she was perpetually smoking; but she charmed him by her wonderful eyes: *per gli occhi stupendi.* After they had both nursed Alfred to convalescence the *occhi stupendi* made short work with the young doctor. In the common phrase, George threw herself at him. People who don't study the facts talk of the new arrangement as though it were a betrayal; but observe that it was of the highest convenience not only to George, but to Alfred. It enabled the poet to get away alone to Paris with an easier conscience; it provided George, compelled to stay on in Venice to complete her tale of "copy," with a protector. But we are in 1834, with romanticism at its most ecstatic and "sublime." So the convenience of the situation is draped in phrases and bedewed with tears. Alfred shed them with enthusiasm, while Pagello swore to him to look after the happiness of George. "Il nostro amore per Alfredo" was Pagello's delightful way of putting it. A singular trio! Evidently poor Pagello was George's slave. What was a poor young Venetian medical gentleman to do? A foreign lady with *occhi stupendi* (and a habit of writing eight or nine hours a day on end) handed over to him, with tears of enthusiasm, by a grateful patient! Anyhow, Pagello showed his sense

by removing the lady to cheaper lodgings. When Venice grew a little too hot he escorted her on a trip to Tirol, taking her on the way (such were the pleasing manners of the time) to see his father ! He was a little short with me, says the son, but he received her with *cortesi ospitalita*, and the pair discussed French literature. Mr. Max Beerbohm should draw the picture.

It has been the fashion to dismiss Pagello as a mere nincompoop. But if he had been that, a George Sand would not have cared a rap for him, and he would have been terrified by George. As it was, when she asked him to take her back to Paris he " chucked " his practice and cheerfully parted with his pictures and plate to provide funds for the journey. He was, at any rate, a disinterested lover ; but the truth seems to be he was not passionate enough for George. " Pagello is an angel of virtue," she writes to Musset, " he is so full of sensibility and so good . . . he surrounds me with care and attention. . . . For the first time in my life I love without passion. . . . Well, for my part, I feel the need to suffer for some one. Oh ! why couldn't I live between the two of you and make you happy without belonging to either ? " But by the time she had reached Paris she was already thinking of belonging to Alfred again, and " door-stepped " Pagello. Her Parisian set, of course, made fun of him. The poor gentleman's situation was, indeed, sufficiently awkward. But it is not true, as it is the fashion to say,

that he was " sent straight back." George, who had retreated to Nohant, invited him there, but he had the good sense to decline. She was afraid he might be in want of money, and wrote to a friend, " he will never take it from a woman, even as a loan." She, at any rate, knew he was a gentleman. But the Italians, with all their romantic traditions, are a practical people. Finding himself adrift in Paris, Pagello remembered his profession, and stayed on as long as he could to study surgery, with such substantial result that he subsequently became one of the chief surgeons in Italy, and gained a special reputation, it is said, in lithotomy. Thus may a fantastic love adventure be turned to good account.

I take my facts about Pagello from Mme. Wladimir Karénine's " George Sand " (1899–1912), the one authentic and exhaustive work on the subject. He died, over 90 years of age, after the first two of her three volumes were published, and what one likes most of all about him is that, till very near the end of his life, he kept his mouth tight shut about the great adventure of his youth. A mere nincompoop could not have done that. In 1881 the Italian Press happened to be reviving the story of the Venetian amour, and they succeeded in getting from Pagello a few of George's letters and some modest, manly reminiscences. He had no piquant scandals to disclose, and merely showed, quite unconsciously, that he was far the most decent of the strange three involved in the Venetian adventure.

As for the Pagello of the new play, the American dramatist has made him just a tame, hopelessly bewildered donkey. He is provided with a fierce Italian sweetheart, to bring him back safe, if scolded, from Paris to Italy. He lives freely on other people's money, George's—when it isn't Alfred's. After all, it doesn't matter, for all the people of the play are mere travesties of the originals, turned (in the published book of the play, though not at the Duke of York's) into modern American citizens. Buloz talks of " boosting " his subscriptions. Alfred says George is " like a noisy old clock that won't stop ticking." Oh dear !

STENDHAL

In reviewing the performance by the New Shakespeare Company of *King Henry V.* I was reminded by one of Henry's lines at Agincourt,

> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers,

to speak, it may have seemed a trifle incongruously, of Stendhal. But it was Stendhal who said, "je n'écris que pour les *happy few*." No quotation could have been more appropriate. Stendhal's readers have always been few, but they have been enthusiastic. In his lifetime he was hardly read at all, though Balzac gave him a magnificent "puff"—so magnificent that even Stendhal himself was taken aback by it and infused a little irony into his thanks. He supposed himself to be ahead of his time, and in 1840 said he would be understood somewhere about 1880. It was rather a good shot, for somewhere about that date there came into being the fierce tribe of Stendhalians, who founded the "Stendhal Club" and included in their number no less a man than M. Paul Bourget. But the vicissitudes of literary reputations are as uncertain as anything in this world, and M. Bourget wondered what would be thought of Stendhal in another forty years—namely, in 1920. Well, 1920 has arrived, as the years have

the habit of doing with abominable rapidity, and any one who likes can seek for an answer to M. Bourget's question. I will hazard a guess. I doubt if in the interval there has been very much change in Stendhal's position. Now, as in 1880, Stendhal is read, and immoderately loved, by the " happy few," and ignored or detested by the rest. But, in enjoying him, the happy few contrive to take him a little less seriously than did the Stendhal Club. That process goes on with even greater reputations. Croce, we are told, takes Dante more lightly than has been the habit of Italian critics in the last half-century. We English are gradually learning to discuss Shakespeare as a human being. And here, pat to the occasion, is a paper on Stendhal in the *Revue de Paris* by M. Anatole France, which handles its subject with the easy Anatolian grace we all know and does, perhaps, at the same time indicate what the readers of 1920 think of Stendhal, though none of them would express their thought of him with the same charm.

It would probably occur to none of them, for instance, as it does to Anatole France, to begin an appreciation of Stendhal with the statement that he " had a leg." Modern costume has abolished this advantage, but Stendhal lived, at any rate for the greater part of his life, in the knee-breeches period, when calves were on exhibition. Unluckily, Stendhal's calves do not appear in the portrait prefixed to the Correspondence, but only the head, which is

rather quaintly ugly. Quaint ugliness in men is not displeasing to women (or where would most of us be ?), but what ne'er won fair lady is faint heart, and Stendhal was timid. Thus, as a young man Stendhal is said to have loved Mlle. Victorine Monnier for five years before he spoke to her. He was not sure that even then she knew who he was. And this was the man who wrote a treatise " De l'Amour " (a delightful book to skim through, nevertheless), and preaches that every woman can be captured by direct assault ! I remember once talking to the wife of a popular novelist, a great enthusiast for love, about her husband's variety and virtuosity on this subject. She replied without enthusiasm : " Yes, in his books." On the same point, M. France reports a capital *sub rosâ* saying of Renan's :—" Les Européens font preuve d'une déplorable indécision en tout ce qui concerne la conjonction des sexes."

As might have been expected from a writer for the " happy few," Stendhal did not suffer fools gladly. A man must have the social, the gregarious spirit for that, and Stendhal lived much to himself. That being so, he could not hope to escape boredom. An incurable *ennui* lurks behind many of his pages ; his enemies would say *in* them. He even got bored with Italy, as so many others of a century ago, who began as enthusiastic lovers, got bored. Byron went to Greece—and Shelley took to yachting with the fatal result we know—because each was bored with Italy. But Stendhal in his later years had to put up with it

at Civita Vecchia—which, for a " littery gent " must have been a deadly dull place in 1840, and would not, I imagine, be very lively even now. Indeed, his existence (after his early experiences with the Grand Army) seems to have been quiet, solitary, and slow. Perhaps that is why his books, his MSS., his letters, are so full of mysterious disguises, initials, pseudonyms, codes, erasures, as though he were being watched by censors and hunted by spies. It was a way of creating for himself an imaginary atmosphere of adventure.

M. France has some good things to say about Stendhal's style. M. Bourget calls his prose algebraic, which is rather hard. But there are many ways of writing, says M. France, and one can succeed at it perfectly without any art, just as one can be a great writer without correctness, as Henri IV. was in his letters and Saint-Simon in his memoirs. No one would read " Le Rouge et le Noir " or " La Chartreuse de Parme," as the Duchess in a Pinero play said she read her French novel, for the style. Anatole France commits himself to a very definite statement. No Frenchman, he says, in Stendhal's time wrote well, the French language was altogether lost, and every author at the beginning of the nineteenth century wrote ill, with the sole exception of Paul Louis Courier. " The disaster to the language, begun in the youth of Mirabeau, increased under the Revolution, despite those giants of the tribune, Vergniaud, Saint-Just, Robespierre, compared with whom our

orators of to-day seem noisy children, despite Camille Desmoulins, author of the last well-written pamphlet France was to read ; the evil was aggravated under the Empire and the Restoration ; it became a frightful thing in the works of Thiers and of Guizot." This, from the greatest living master of French, is not without its interest. No one could say the same thing of our English prose in the same period—a period that gave us, to take a few instances at random, Cowper's letters and Byron's, and the Essays of Elia.

Stendhal, then, was not remarkable for style. But one gathers that, in the rare occurrence of congenial society, he was a good talker. One would give something to have been a third in the box at La Scala when Stendhal, a young officer of Napoleon, met an old, lanky, melancholy general of artillery—no other than Choderlos de Laclos, author, before the Revolution, of " Les Liaisons Dangereuses." Stendhal, as a child, had known the original of Laclos's infamous Mme. de Merteuil, an original who appears to have been even worse than the copy. Some years later George Sand, on her way to Italy with Musset, met Stendhal on a Rhone steamer, and he told her a story which, she said, shocked her. She does not repeat it. One would really rather like to hear a story which could shock George Sand.

JULES LEMAÎTRE

It was in the first week of August, 1914. The crowd on the seafront was outwardly as gay as ever, only buying up the evening papers with a little more eagerness than usual to read the exciting news from Belgium. We had not had time to realize what war meant. Some one held out a paper to me and said, quite casually, "I see Lemaître's dead." This event seemed to me for the moment bigger than the war itself. At any rate it came more intimately home to me. The world in an uproar, nations toppling to ruin, millions of men in arms—these are only vague mental pictures. They disquiet the imagination, but are not to be realized by it. The death of your favourite author, the spiritual companion and solace of half a lifetime, is of an infinitely sharper reality, and you feel it as though it were a physical pang.

Lemaître died where, whenever he could, he had lived, at Tavers in the Loiret, the heart of France. He was always writing about Tavers, though he never named it by its name. In describing the far-off cruises of Loti and the indefatigable touristry of Bourget he says:—"There is somewhere a big orchard that goes down to a brook edged with willows and poplars. It is for me the most beauti-

ful landscape in the world, for I love it, and it knows me." To understand Lemaître you must keep that little *vignette* affectionately in your mind, as he did. M. Henry Bordeaux, in his charming little monograph "Jules Lemaître," rightly insists upon Lemaître's passionate love for his native countryside. But you never can tell; his insistence seems only to have bored a recent reviewer of the book. "The insistence on Lemaître's patriotism and on his being 'l'homme de sa terre' is a little wearying; of course he was 'l'homme de sa terre,' but he was many other things, or we should never have heard of him." As who should say, of course Cyrano had a nose, but he had many other things, or we should never have heard of him. But Cyrano's nose was a conspicuous feature, and, if we are not told of it, we shall not fully understand Cyrano. So with Lemaître's love of his countryside by the Loire.

It made him, to begin with, an incorrigible stay-at-home. In this, as in so many other things, he was a typical Frenchman. We English, born roamers as we are, take for granted the educative influence of travel. Places and people, we know by elementary experience, are only to be realized by being seen on the spot. Lemaître thought otherwise. Why, he asked, need I go to England? I can get all England out of Dickens and George Eliot and my friend Bourget's "Impressions de Voyage." And then he drew a picture of England, as he confidently believed it to be, that is about as "like it" as, say,

the average untravelled Englishman's notion of Tavers. He was never tired of quoting a passage of the " Imitation " about the variety of changing sky and scene. But a cloistered monk is not exactly an authority on this subject.

Again, the fact that Lemaître was " l'homme de sa terre " is of vital literary importance ; it affected not only the spirit, but the actual direction of his criticism. It inclined him to ignore or to misapprehend those features in a foreign author that precisely marked how he also, in his turn, was the man of his countryside, and that very different from the banks of the Loire. Some of his comments on Shakespeare, for instance, are of a Gallicism almost Voltairean. And it fostered illusions like that which possessed him about the " Northern literatures "—Ibsen, Hauptmann, Strindberg, and so forth—that they were mere belated imitators of the French romantics. The fact that Lemaître was essentially a man of his province involved the fact that his criticism now and then was also provincial.

Indeed, his very provincialism heightened his enjoyment of Paris and sharpened his sense of Parisianism. Things which the born Parisian takes for granted were delightful novelties for him, challenging observation and analysis. " Il est," said Degas, " toujours bien content d'être à Paris." He was " bien content " because he was " the young man from the country," the man from Tavers. The phenomenon is familiar all the world over.

Further, the fact that Lemaître remained "l'homme de sa terre," still getting his clothes from the village tailor, never so much at home as among the farmers, country schoolmasters, and peasants he had known from his infancy, gives a quite peculiar savour to his remarks on "le monde" —the great fashionable scene, which he describes and analyses, to be sure, as a philosopher, but as a philosopher who is, consciously and indeed defiantly, an "outsider."

These are all integral parts of Lemaître's critical individuality. Without them he would have been another man altogether—a point so obvious to all lovers of Lemaître that it would never have occurred to me to mention it, had it not been for our reviewer's weariness of being reminded that he was "l'homme de sa terre." Evidently the reviewer cannot forgive Lemaître for his treatment of the "décadents" and the "symbolistes," and other cranks. "Think of the people Lemaître missed." The people include, it seems, Moréas, Laforgue, Samain, and Rimbaud. Well, after thinking of these people, many of us will be resigned to "missing" them with Lemaître.

It is odd that the reviewer, while hunting for objections to Lemaître's criticism, as criticism, should have "missed" the really valid one—that it is often not so much critical as "high fantastical." Lemaître was apt to be carried away by his imagination, and to run through a varied assortment of comparisons, associations, and parallels that coloured

rather than cleared the issue. The rigorist Croce has, in passing, laid his finger upon this. He quotes Lemaître on Corneille. Polyeucte, says the critic, recalls at once " St. Paul, Huss, Calvin, and Prince Kropotkine," and awakes " the same curiosity as a Russian Nihilist, of the kind to be seen in Paris in bygone years, in some *brasserie* . . . of whom the whisper went round that at St. Petersburg he had killed a general or a prefect of police." Croce dismisses this sort of thing as *ricami di fantasia*, and certainly, from the point of view of strict criticism, it is a weakness of Lemaître's.

After all, however (as the counsel in " Pickwick " pleaded about something else), it is an amiable weakness; it makes him such incomparably good reading! Heaven forbid that I should reopen the old stupid, stale controversy about " impressionist " and " judicial " criticism; but it is obvious that the one sort does explicitly acknowledge and glory in what is implicit in the other—the individual temperament and talent of the critic himself. If the " impressionist " who gives free play to his temperament is apt sometimes to get out of bounds—to be substituting *ricami di fantasia* for strict analysis—he may be all the more stimulating to the reader. He may be giving the reader not scrupulous criticism, but something better. It all depends, of course, on the temperament and the talent. Lemaître's *ricami di fantasia* are part, if not the best part, of his charm.

JANE AUSTEN

THE amusing parlour-game of Jane Austen topography is always being played somewhere. A few years ago there was a correspondence in the *Literary Supplement* about the precise position of Emma's Highbury on the map. Some Austenites voted for Esher, others for Cobham, others again for Bookham. There has been another correspondence about Mansfield Park. Lady Vaux of Harrowden "identifies" it with Easton Neston, near Towcester. Sir Francis Darwin and the Master of Downing are for Easton in Huntingdonshire. People have consulted Paterson's Roads about it. Mr. Mackinnon, K.C., points out that it must have been about four miles north of Northampton. But I like him best when he says, "I do not suppose any actual park was in Jane Austen's mind." *Brigadier, vous avez raison!* I do not suppose any actual place was in Jane Austen's mind when she assigned her personages a home or a lodging. You might as well try to fix the number of the house in Gracechurch Street where Elizabeth's uncle lived. Are we not shown the "real" Old Curiosity Shop? And the "real" Bleak House?

And Juliet's tomb at Verona? And the exact point of the Cobb where Louisa Musgrove fell?

It is easy to see why Jane Austen lends herself more readily than most writers to this topographical game. She was very fond of topographical *colour*, giving not only real place-names to the neighbourhood of the fictitious homes, but exact distances in miles. It was so many miles from Highbury to Kingston market-place, and so many to Box Hill. Yet she was always vague about the exact spot from which these distances were calculated. For there her imagination had its home, it was her private Paradise of Dainty Devices; she wanted a free hand there, unhampered by maps, road books, and other intrusions from the actual world. In fact, she did with real places just what Scott, say, did with historical people, kept them to surround the imaginary centre of the tale. You can "identify" Charles Edward, but not Waverley. You can "identify" Nottingham, but not Mansfield Park.

It is a mercy that Jane Austen never describes houses—never describes them, I mean, with the minute (and tedious) particularity of a Balzac—or the topographical game would have been supplemented by an architectural one, and we should have had the "real" Mansfield Park pointed out to us from its description, like Hawthorne's House of the Seven Gables. Indeed, she never, in the modern sense, describes anything, never indulges in description for its own sake. She never even expatiated on

the beauties of nature, taking them for granted and, indeed, on at least one famous occasion—when strawberries were being picked while the apple trees were still in bloom at Donwell Abbey—rather mixing them up. Her descriptions always had a practical purpose. If it rained in Bath, it was in order that Anne might, or might not, meet Captain Wentworth. We know that Sir Thomas's " own dear room " at Mansfield Park was next to the billiard-room, because the novelist wanted us to know how he came plump upon the ranting Mr. Yates. But that detail, thank goodness, won't enable us to " identify " Mansfield Park.

Doesn't it argue a rather matter-of-fact frame of mind—I say it with all respect to the correspondents of the *Literary Supplement*—this persistent tendency to " identify " the imaginary with the actual, the geographical, the historical ? There is a notable instance of it in the Letters of Henry James. The novelist had described in " The Bostonians " a certain veteran philanthropist, " Miss Birdseye." Forthwith all Boston identified the imaginary Miss Birdseye with a real Miss Peabody. " I am quite appalled," writes Henry James to his brother William, " by your note in which you assault me on the subject of my having painted a ' portrait from life ' of Miss Peabody ! I was in some measure prepared for it by Lowell's (as I found the other day) taking it for granted that she had been my model, and an allusion to the same effect in a note

from aunt Kate. Still, I didn't expect the charge to come from you. I hold that I have done nothing to deserve it. . . . Miss Birdseye was conceived entirely from my moral consciousness, like every other person I have ever drawn." It is odd that a man like William James, a professed student of the human mind and its workings, should have made such a mistake. I remember a saying attributed, years ago, to Jowett about the two brothers: one, he remarked, was a writer of fiction and the other a psychologist, and the fiction was all psychology and the psychology all fiction. Anyhow, I think if any one had written to Jane Austen to tax her with Highbury being Esher or Mansfield Park Easton Neston, she would have been able to reply that they were conceived entirely from her moral consciousness. And I fancy she would have smiled at her little trick of giving the exact mileage from her imaginary centre to real places having "sold" so many worthy people. Very likely she would have brought the topographical game into the Hartfield family circle, as a suitable alternative for Mr. Elton's enigmas, charades, conundrums, and polite puzzles, or for Mr. Woodhouse's "Kitty, a fair but frozen maid," which made him think of poor Isabella—who was very near being christened Catherine, after her grandmamma.

The truth, surely, is that this place-hunting, this seeking to "identify" the imaginary with the actual map-marked spot, is only a part of the larger

misconception of imaginative work—the misconception which leads to a perpetual search for the "originals" of an author's personages, especially when these personages have a full, vivid life of their own. Jane Austen has often been compared to Shakespeare, ever since Macaulay set the fashion. Well, it is naturally upon Shakespeare that this misconception has wreaked its worst. Commentators have gravely presented us with the "original" of Falstaff, of Sir Toby Belch, of Dogberry—nay, of Iago. Surely, the only "originals" of these people were Shakespeare himself? What were they but certain Shakespearean moods, humours, intimate experiences, temptations felt, but resisted, impulses controlled in actual life but allowed free play in imaginative reverie? No one that I know of has been foolish enough to charge Jane Austen with "copying" any of her characters from actual individuals, but, if you are in quest of "identifications," is it not possible to "identify" many of them, the women at any rate—for, of course, her women bear the stamp of authentic reality much more plainly than her men—is it not possible to identify them with sides, tendencies, moods of Jane Austen herself? Here, I know, I am at variance with a distinguished authority, from whom it is always rash to differ. Professor Raleigh says:—"Sympathy with her characters she frequently has, identity never. Not in the high-spirited Elizabeth Bennet, not in that sturdy young patrician

Emma, not even in Anne Elliot of ' Persuasion,' is the real Jane Austen to be found. She stands for ever aloof." Pass, for Emma and Elizabeth ! But the " even " in the case of Anne gives me courage. We are not, of course, talking of identity in regard to external circumstances. Jane Austen was not the daughter of a Somersetshire baronet and did not marry a captain in the navy. But that Jane only " sympathized " with the heart and mind of Anne Elliot is to my thinking absurdly short of the truth. That the adventures of Anne's soul, her heart-beatings, misgivings and intimate reassurances about Wentworth's feeling for her had been Jane Austen's own is to me as certain as though we had the confession under her own hand and seal. The woman who drew Anne's timid, doubting, wondering love must have been in love herself and in that way. One short sentence settles that for me. The consciousness of love disposes Anne " to pity every one, as being less happy than herself." What lover does not know that secret feeling ? And if he had never loved, would he have guessed it by " sympathy " ? (You will find, by the way, the very same secret divulged by Balzac in one of his love-letters to Mme. Hanska—among the feelings she inspires him with is " I know not what disdain in contemplating other men.") In the face of this, what need to go ransacking Jane Austen's Letters or Memoir for evidence that she had a love affair ? No, it is because there is most of Jane Austen's spiritual

"identity" in Anne that "Persuasion" is the sweetest, tenderest, and truest of her books. I apologize for having wandered from Mansfield Park and Easton Neston and the other engaging futilities of the parlour game.

T. W. ROBERTSON

Fifty years ago to-morrow (February 3rd, 1871) died Thomas William Robertson, a great reformer of the English drama in his day, but now, like so many other reformers, little more than a name. His plays have ceased to hold the stage. Very few of them still allow themselves to be read. To-day their matter seems, for the most part, poor, thin, trivial, and their form somewhat naïve. "Robertsonian" has become for the present generation a meaningless epithet, and "teacup and saucer school" an empty gibe. Even within a few years of Robertson's death George Meredith could only say of him: "In a review of our modern comedies, those of the late Mr. Robertson would deserve honourable mention." As the old tag says, times change and we in them. Robertson is now a "back number." His comedies are not classics, for classics are live things; they are merely historical documents. Yet you have only to turn to such a record as "The Bancrofts' Recollections" to see how live these comedies once were, how stimulating to their time, how enthusiastically they were hailed as a new birth, a new portent, a new art. Indeed, for my part, when I read the glowing eulogies

of John Oxenford and Tom Taylor and the other critics of that time I am filled with something like dismay. All that warm (and rather wordy—it was the way of the 'sixties) appreciation gone dead and cold! I wonder how many of our own judgments will stand the test of fifty years. Br—r—r!

Well, to understand Robertson's success, we have to think ourselves back into his time. We have to ignore what followed him and to see what he displaced. Up to his date the theatre, under the great French influence of the 'thirties, still remained romantic. But that influence was wearing out. A new influence was making itself felt in France, through the dialectics of Dumas *fils* and Augier's commonsense, though the new influence still bore trace of the old romanticism, as we can see at least to-day. *La Dame aux Camélias*, so romantic to-day, was greeted in 1855 as a masterpiece of realism! And it *was* comparatively realistic, realistic for its time. But the English theatre, a second-hand theatre, still stuck to the old French romantic tradition. It lived largely on adaptations from Scribe. Robertson himself adapted a Scribe play (and not a bad one), *Bataille de Dames*. He had, however, come under the newer, the realistic, or romantico-realistic influence. He adapted Augier's *L'Aventurière*. Tom Stylus's pipe in the ballroom (in *Society*) had previously been dropped by Giboyer in *Les Effrontés*. I cannot help thinking that the new French reaction had a good deal to do with the

Robertsonian reaction, certainly as much as the influence of Thackeray to which Sir Arthur Pinero traces it.

But I must let Sir Arthur speak for himself. In a letter in which he has been so good as to remind me of to-morrow's date he says :—

" I look upon Robertson as a genius. Not that he wrote anything very profound, or anything very witty, but because, at a time when the English stage had sunk to even a lower ebb than it is usually credited with reaching ; when the theatres stank of stale gas and orange-peel and the higher drama was represented mainly by adaptations from Scribe by Leicester Buckingham ; he had the vision to see that a new public could be created, and an old and jaded one refreshed, by invoking for dramatic purposes the spirit, and using some part of the method, of Thackeray."

This is admirable, and I only wish our dramatists would more often be tempted into the region of dramatic criticism. All the same I confess that (after going through all Robertson's plays) it seems to me to overrate the Thackerayan influence. There is a little sentimental cynicism in Robertson and there is much in Thackeray. There is a tipsy old reprobate in *Pendennis* and there is another in *Caste*. Tom Stylus helped to found a newspaper and so did George Warrington. Esther D'Alroy tried vainly to buckle on her husband's sword-belt when he was ordered on service, and Amelia Osborne hovered

helplessly about her husband with his red sash on the eve of Waterloo. But such matters as these are common property, *communia*, and the artist's business, which Horace said was so difficult, is *proprie communia dicere*, to give them an individual turn. Drunkenness apart I don't think Eccles is a bit like Costigan. As to the Thackerayan spirit, would that Robertson had "invoked" it! His plays might then be classics still, as Thackeray is, instead of merely documents.

If we are to connect Robertson with some typical Victorian novelist, I would myself, with all deference to Sir Arthur, suggest Trollope. His young women, his Naomi Tighes and Bellas, his Polly and Esther Eccles, strike me as eminently Trollopean. There are traces of Mrs. Proudie in both Mrs. Sutcliffe and Lady Ptarmigant. But, probably, these also are only instances of *communia*. Probably the young ladies (and, for all I know, the old ones, too) were real types of the 'sixties, as we see them in Leech's drawings. Bless their sweet baby-faces and their simple hearts and their pork-pie hats!

The Robertsonian way is often spoken of as a "return to nature." It is, in fact, a common eulogy of most reactions in art. "Don Quixote" was a return to nature, compared with the romances of chivalry, and "Tom Jones" was a return to nature, compared with "Don Quixote." The world gradually changes its point of view and sees the facts of life in a new light. Artists change with the rest of the

world, and give expression to the new vision. They are hailed as reformers until the next reformation ; they seem to have returned to nature, until the world's view of " nature " again changes. I think, as I have said, that Robertson's work is to be related to the general anti-romantic reaction that started in France in mid-nineteenth century. But all reactions keep something of what they react against, and Robertson's reaction retains a good deal of romance. *School* is as romantic as the German Cinderella-story, on which it was founded. The central situation of *Caste*—the return home of the husband given up for dead—is essentially romantic, not a jot less romantic than in *La joie fait peur.* The scenes at the " Owl's Roost " in *Society,* applauded for their daring realism, are realistic presentations of the last stronghold of the romantic Murger tradition, literary " Bohemia." Robertson's dialogue was often the high-flown lingo of the old romance. (In dialogue we have " returned to nature " several times over since his day.) But more often it was not. He astonished and delighted his contemporaries by making many of his people speak in the theatre as they spoke out of it. He invented sentimental situations that were charming then and would be charming now—love-passages in London squares and over milk-jugs in the moonlight. He had been an actor and a stage manager and knew how to make the very most of stage resources. Take the scene of George's return in *Caste.* There is a

cry of " milkaow " and a knock at the door. " Come in," cries Polly to the milkman—and in walks with the milk-can one risen from the dead ! This thrilling *coup de théâtre* is followed, however, by something much better, the pathetic scenes of Polly's hysterical joy and her tender artifice in breaking the news to Esther. I confess that I cannot read these scenes without tears. There was a quality of freshness and delicate simplicity in Robertson's work at its best that was a true " return to nature." No need, is there ? to speak of the luck his work had in finding such interpreters as the Bancrofts and their company or of the luck the actors had in finding the work to interpret—the Bancrofts themselves have already told that tale. But it all happened half a century ago and I suppose we are not to expect a future Robertson revival. The past is past. Life is perpetual change. The more reason for not neglecting occasions of pious commemoration. Let us, then, give a friendly thought to " Tom " Robertson to-morrow.

VERSATILITY

Now that the *Literary Supplement* costs 6*d.*, one feels entitled to examine one's relation to it with a certain sense of solemnity. But I well know what mine is, before examination. Even when it cost 3*d.*, my relation to it was always one of weekly disconcertment. It revealed to me so many things I didn't know and never should know, yet known presumably to some other reader. Now omniscience is derided as a "foible," but why should one be ashamed to confess it as an ideal? Frankly, I envy the man who was so various that he seemed to be not one but all mankind's epitome. He must have got more fun out of life than your profound specialist. It is to give this various reader this variety of fun that (I surmise, but the editor will know for certain) the *Supplement* exists. But for me, imperfectly various, it means something bordering on despair. I suppose other readers are more sensible, and just take what suits them, leaving the rest. But I simply hate leaving anything. Take the ten columns modestly headed "New Books and Reprints." What a world of unknown topics and alien ideas and unfathomable theories about everything this simple title covers!

VERSATILITY

Is there any reader whose intellectual equipment includes at once the biography of Absalom Watkin, of Manchester, the Indian Trade Inquiry Reports on Hides and Skins, an elementary knowledge of the Bengali language, and the particular philosophy of mysticism entertained by Mr. Watkin (not Absalom, but another)? Mine doesn't—and there's the pang, for each and all these subjects, simply because they are there, staring me in the face, the face of an absolutely blank mind about them, excite my intellectual curiosity. I should like to know all about ergatocracy—merely on the strength of its alluring name—and the true story, from the Franciscan point of view, of the Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution in England, and Lord Grey's reminiscences of intercourse with Mr. Roosevelt, and the history of the Assyrian "millet" in the great war, and what is meant by the "Free Catholic" tendency in the Nonconformist Churches. Yet it is fairly certain that I shall have to do without any knowledge of most, if not all, of these matters which presumably engage the enlightened interest of some other readers.

That is why I say the *Supplement* disconcerts me every week. It makes me feel ignorant and, what is worse, lonely, cut off from so many human sympathies, cold to enthusiasms that are agitating other breasts, isolated in a crowd who, for all I know, may be banding themselves against me with the secret password "ergatocracy," an uninitiated

stranger among the friends of Mr. Absalom Watkin of Manchester. Indeed, unlike " the master of this college," I am so far from feeling that " what I don't know isn't knowledge " as to find it the one sort of knowledge I itch to possess and suppose myself to have lost a golden opportunity in missing. There are strong men about, I am aware, who say they don't care. They profess themselves content with knowing a few things thoroughly, with their own little set of enthusiasms, and repeat proverbs about jacks of all trades. I respect these sturdy men, but all the time my heart goes out to the other kind, the men of versatility, the men whose aim is to understand everything, to sympathize with every human emotion, to leave no corner of experience unexplored. And some such aim as this is indispensable for the critic, whose business is primarily to understand. To understand what he criticizes he has to begin by putting himself in its author's place and standing at his point of view—to take on, in short, in turn, innumerable other personalities, temperaments, and tastes than his own. Other men may, but a critic must, be versatile. He must have the faculty of lending himself, with profusion, to other minds and other experiences—lending himself, but not giving, reserving the right of resuming his own individuality and of applying his own standards.

That resumption of self is easy enough. The true difficulty is in surrendering it, even for a while. One finds the task particularly hard, I think, in lending

oneself to tastes one has outgrown. Remember your schoolboy enthusiasm over Macaulay's style. You have lost that long ago, and are now, perhaps, a little ashamed of it. Yet you must recapture it, if only for a moment; that is to say, you must try to reflect in yourself the joy that Macaulay felt in writing as he did, if you are sitting down to try to criticize him adequately. This is difficult, this momentary renunciation of your present taste in favour of the taste you have outgrown. Remember your schoolboy attitude to Scott; how you read feverishly for the story and nothing but the story, and simply skipped the long prefaces and introductions and copious historical notes? To-day your taste has matured, and you see the prefaces and notes as a welcome setting for the story, as completing for you the picture of the author's mind in the act of composition. But you will have to go back to your discarded taste and think only of the story if you are recommending Scott to your youngsters.

This difficulty is perpetually confronting one in the theatre. I confess, I find the theatre almost as disconcerting as the *Literary Supplement* for an analogous, though not identical, reason. In that case you have the bewildering spectacle of things unknown; in this, of tastes outgrown. One afternoon I saw a little play translated from the French, limpid in expression, simplicity itself in form, spare almost to austerity in its use of theatrical means. Not a word, not a situation, was emphasized. This

or that point was neatly, briefly indicated, offered just as a germ which might be safely left to your own intelligence to develop. The action was pure acted irony, but not an ironical word was uttered. This, of course, is the sort of play that refreshes the jaded critic, and he has to resist the temptation to over-praise it. The next evening I saw a play diligently crammed with everything that the other had carefully left out—emphasis, repetition, six words where one would have sufficed, " dramatic " situations and suspenses, the gentle humours of life concentrated into eccentricities of stage " character." There is a numerous, and entirely respectable, public with a taste in this stage ; it likes dots on its *i*'s, things thrust under its nose, so that it can see them, and repeated over and over again, so that it can understand them. That is a taste which the jaded critic cannot but have outgrown. Yet the play was good, sound work of its kind, and the critic's first duty was to force himself back into his outgrown taste and see the play with the spirit with which the author wrote it and its proper public received it. I say his first duty ; it was open to him afterwards to recover his own personality and make his distinctions. But this first duty was hard. It is an ever-recurring trial of critical conscience. " These are our troubles, Mr. Wesley," as the peevish gentleman said when the footman put too much coal on the fire.

WOMEN'S JOURNALS

Who was the wit who, to the usual misquotation from Buffon, *le style c'est l'homme*, rejoined *mais ce n'est pas la femme?* The statement has perhaps as much truth as is required from a witticism; it is half true. Woman, unlike man, does not express all of herself. She has her reticences, her euphemisms, and her asterisks. She will on no account name all things by their names. It is one of the childish weaknesses of men, she holds, to practise veracity to excess. Like children, they cannot help blurting out the truth. But she, from diligent experiments on her own person, has learnt that truth looks all the better for having its nose powdered and its cheeks discreetly rouged. Readers of George Sand's "Histoire de ma Vie" are often baffled in tracing the fine distinction between the woman and the make-up. Therein the work is typical, illustrating as it does the general desire of women in literature to look pretty—to look pretty in their mirror, for themselves, for their own pleasure. Not, as is sometimes erroneously asserted, to look pretty in the eyes of men or of a particular man. So one is amused but scarcely convinced by Heine's well-known remark that every woman who writes has one eye on her paper and the other on

some man—except the Countess Hahn-Hahn, who had only one eye. Evidently the generalization was invented just to spite the countess. Mme. de Sévigné's letters to her daughter are far better than those to Bussy-Rabutin. George Eliot may have had one eye on Lewes when she did her best to spoil her novels by scientific pedantry—which was sheer waste (let alone the damage to the novels), as Lewes was, by all accounts, the ugliest man in London. But on what man had Jane Austen an eye? One might ask the question about our thousands of women novelists to-day, and at once see the refutation of Heine in simple arithmetic; there would not be enough men to go round. There is clearly no rule. Heine may have been thinking of George Sand, already mentioned, whose eye—her "glad eye," I fear it must be called—revolved as she wrote upon a round dozen of men in turn.

But there is one department of women's literature wherein the element of doubt altogether vanishes. I mean the journals they publish, or get published, for themselves. They cannot write here with their eye on some man. Indeed, men, nice men ("nice" in the strict sense, approved in a certain talk between Catherine Morland and Henry Tilney), are rather chary of even approaching such journals. They exhibit advertisements of "undies," corsets, and other things that used to be called feminine mysteries, but are now entitled perhaps to the rank of notorieties which make one instinctively stammer, "Oh, I beg

your pardon," and beat a hasty retreat. So, it will at once be said, do all newspapers nowadays, and that is true. Yet, somehow, one feels more indiscreet in lighting upon them in the women's journals than in the others. For one thing, they seem to be more dainty and alluring by reason of more artistic execution and glazed paper, so that they may satisfy the critical eye of their proper wearers. And, for another, there is a difference between the highroad of the newspaper, whereon a man willy-nilly must travel, and the by-path of the women's journal, where he is at best a privileged intruder. If you ask, " Goosey, goosey, gander, whither shall I wander ? " there is a distinct difference between answering, " Upstairs and downstairs," and " in my lady's chamber."

All this, of course, as the judicious will have perceived, really means that I am as interested as, I suppose, are most of my fellow-men in all these curiously dainty and elegant ingenuities of women's apparel, and that I am only pretending to be shocked. (After all, in his pursuit of veracity, even a man may occasionally powder his nose.) The advertisers, bless them, know all about that. They know that the natural man shares the naïve admiration which Pepys once expressed on seeing Lady Castlemaine's wonderful *lingerie* and laces hanging out to dry on a clothes-line in Whitehall. But the natural man generally finds it convenient to be more reticent about it than Pepys.

The first number of the *Woman's Supplement*, which has prompted these reflections, suggests another: the perpetual wonder and delight of men at the success with which women accommodate facts to their ideals. We saw them, just now, doing this with their literature; we saw them determined that, at all costs, this shall be pleasing and themselves the most pleasing things in it; we saw the notable success of George Sand in accommodating her historical to her ideal self. But they are as successful with nature as with history. Just now, for example, sloping shoulders are manifestly the ideal—sloping shoulders with the obviously appropriate balloon sleeves, as in Mr. Bernard Lintott's lady, or else with no sleeves at all, as in M. Jean Doumergue's. And part of the same ideal is that the "figure" shall be anything but "full." Now are women's shoulders naturally more sloping or their figures less full than they used to be? These are puzzling questions, but not beyond conjecture, and, for my part, I guess that the answer is No. Yet our women have easily triumphed over nature and slope their shoulders with the uniformity of a regiment sloping arms, while every woman with a full figure has quietly become a *fausse maigre*.

While I am about it, let me echo the usual male protest. As the *Supplement* shows, women have not yet persuaded themselves to abandon their detestable high heels. The consequence is that there threatens to be no longer any such thing as a graceful gait.

Incessu patuit dea will soon have become an incomprehensible allusion. And that hideous square patch which too often peeps above the back of the shoe? I suppose it is just a practical device to strengthen the stocking in a part of stress; but I hardly think really "nice" women can abide it. On the whole, however, I subscribe cheerfully to the current opinion that woman's dress was never so charming as it is at present. That is probably an illusion. The mysterious laws that regulate fashion mercifully regulate also the capacity for enjoying it. And it is a mercy, too, that the beauty of woman can triumph even over "old-fashioned" things. To our modern eyes the fashions of the '70's and '80's were far from beautiful in themselves—bunchy, humpy, without "line." Yet, when they were playing *Peter Ibbetson*, one saw some fair women in them—and was at once reconciled, able in fact to see them with the eye of their period.

PRACTICAL LITERATURE

"PRAY, Sir," a leader-writer is said to have asked Delane, "how do you say 'good fellow' in print?" and to have been answered, "Sir, you should not say it at all." There are thousands of ambitious young people to-day who want to know how you say good fellow, or awful snipe, or old bean, or whatever, in print, and that is why there are Schools of Journalism. A paper of instructions from one of these excellent institutions has lately fallen into my hands, and there seems no reason for withholding it from publication. It appears to be in the nature of a preliminary introduction to what a distinguished journalist has well called "practical literature." For Journalists, in Matthew Arnold's quotation, drive at practice, and to be practical you must begin by learning the shibboleths—that is to say, the turns of phrase and modes of treatment that long experience has approved and constant readers are accustomed to expect. There is no mystery about it; they are much more simple than a vain people supposeth. But it is all-important to get them right at the outset—or, as is said in practical literature, from the

word " go "—and the advice the paper has to give about them is as follows :—

Descriptive Articles on Great Occasions.—The beginner will probably find there is very little to describe. He must learn to invent. Street crowds have a pestilent habit of not cheering at the appropriate moment ; your first business will be to make them. Celebrities flash by in closed carriages, totally hidden by the police ; you will ruthlessly expose them, bowing to the storm of applause which sweeps across the multitude filling the square and lining the classic steps of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. If the Royal Family is present you will need especial tact. Find the golden mean between the familiar and the abject. Be human, like Euripides. Above all, the homely " note " is recommended. You cannot say too often that the King " looked bronzed." Thousands of pallid readers who go to Margate for a week in order to come back looking bronzed will appreciate that. It is loyal, it attests that robust health that we all desire for his Majesty, and at the same time it is homely. " I, too, have been bronzed," the reader says, as the barber at Byron's funeral said, " I, too, have been unhappy." Whatever is offered the Queen, a bouquet, a trowel, a sample of the local product the Queen will " smilingly accept." If she tastes the men's (or boy scouts' or factory girls') soup, she will " pronounce it excellent." Preserve a cheerful tone, especially with *contre-temps*. If Gold Stick in Waiting drops his gold

stick, you will note that "the Royal party were highly amused" and that "the little Princess laughed heartily."

Politics and International Affairs.—Here practical literature takes a hint from the other sort. Be historical. Be reminded of the great Westminster Election and the Duchess of Devonshire. Remember Speaker Onslow. Compare whatever you dislike to the Rump. Magna Charta and Habeas Corpus must now be allowed a rest, but you may still allude to Thermidor and Brumaire, the Mountain and the Cordeliers Club. "Mr." Pitt sounds well. Open your leader with "Nothing in the annals of diplomacy since the Treaty of Utrecht (or the Treaty of Vienna, or whatever other treaty you can think of) has so disgraced," &c. The second paragraph should begin "Nor is that all." Be slightly archaistic. Words like "caitiff" and "poltroon" may be discreetly used. Books recommended for the course: Gibbon, Junius, early volumes of *Punch*, Mahan's "Sea Power," and (for quotations) R. L. Stevenson's "Wrong Box."

Foreign Correspondence.—Remember that the particular capital you happen to be posted at is the real hub of your newspaper, and wonder every morning "what those fellows at the London office can be about" to print so much stuff about their silly local affairs. Practise political divination from the minutest data. If some little actress at the Marigny, or Belasco's, makes you a *pied de nez* you will say

that " the Gallic temper (or public opinion in the Eastern States) is showing signs of dangerous exasperation." If you find a junior Attaché lunching at the golf club on Sunday, you will say " the political tension is now at any rate momentarily relaxed." If they charge you a few centimes or cents more for your box of chocolates you will say " the population is now groaning under famine prices, and State intervention cannot be much longer delayed."

Criticism of the Arts and the Theatre.—As criticism is not practical, it hardly comes within the scope of instructions on practical literature. But newspapers, after all, must be filled, and, if the advertisements permit, room may be found even for criticism. Fortunately, it requires little if any instruction. The office boy, if he is not proud, may be turned on to it at a pinch. The charwomen, when they can be spared from their more useful work, often prove neat hands at it. Ideas are to be discouraged ; a few catchwords are all that is necessary, with one decent hat for Private Views and one ditto dress suit for First Nights. The art critic will do well to find a new and unknown artist and track him down from show to show, comparing him in turn to Tintoretto, the lesser Umbrians, and the Giottos at Padua. (See Vasari *passim*, a repertory of delightful names.) The theatrical critic will make it his chief care to construct a striking sentence which the managers can quote, without excessive garbling, in their advertisements. It can end with " rapturously

applauded," with " rocked with laughter," or with " for many a night to come."

N.B.—Personally conducted parties of students taken to the theatre to see leading actresses " making great strides in their art " and " having the ball at their feet " and to watch Mr. Collins " surpassing himself." They will afterwards be shown cases of type and instructed in the thermometrical test of the temperature at which it becomes " cold print."

. . . The paper does not end here. In a special section on the language of the poster, it offers a prize for any hitherto undiscovered application of the word " amazing." It goes on to give instructions to writers on cricket, golf, and sport, with a stock selection of anecdotes about " W.G." and " E.M.," and a plan to scale of the Dormy House and Mr. Harry Tate's moustache when he addresses the ball and the audience. But these are awful mysteries which I dare not follow the paper in profaning.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY WOMAN

The serious research that some contemporary French students are devoting to our English literature is one of the most valuable by-products of the Entente. We have had of recent years remarkable French monographs on Wordsworth, on Cowper, on Crabbe, on Hazlitt, which are fully as authoritative as any of our native commentaries. And, turning over the new volumes at a French bookseller's the other day, I came across another Gallic tribute of this kind, with a rather lengthy title, "La Femme Anglaise au XIX^{e} siècle et son évolution d'après le roman anglais contemporain," by Mme. Léonie Villard. Mme. Villard seems to have read all our modern English novels, from Richardson's "Pamela" down to the latest piece of propagandism of Mr. H. G. Wells. Of course mere literary curiosity could never have carried any human being through all that; Mme. Villard is an ardent "feminist," and, like her sisters, capable of miraculous physical endurance for the "cause." A mere man may "devour whole libraries," but it takes a fair feminist to swallow the huge mass of English fiction.

Reading exclusively from a single point of view, Mme. Villard seems to have sometimes sacrificed her critical sense to her principles. Thus, as a type of the nineteenth-century "old maid," so neglected, so ill-used by society, she selects Miss Rachel Wardle! Dickens, generally "so pitiful to the weak, so generous to the oppressed and the conquered," had no pity for her. But upon us it is incumbent to pity and understand and find excuses for her. "At any rate, her desire to be loved and, above all, to experience in other surroundings a freer and less humiliating life should have nothing surprising for us." Isn't this rather a solemn way of describing the lady's amours with Mr. Tupman and Mr. Jingle? Is it really the fault of society if an amorous old dame will be silly? And is she not to be laughed at if she happen to fall into the category "old maid"? Mrs. Bardell was amorous too. So was Mr. Tupman. Dickens laughs at these also—but then they were not old maids, they didn't illustrate a "feminine case." Then there was Mrs. Jellyby. She reminded some people of Harriet Martineau. But Dickens had deformed the type (who was intelligent and was not the mother of a family) so as to present the "new woman" in the least favourable light. He "has fixed for half a century the type of the intellectual or enfranchised woman, as conceived by those who trust the judgment of others rather than their own direct observation." The question, surely, is not whether Mrs. Jellyby was unlike Harriet Martineau,

but whether in herself she was a sufficiently comic personage. Most readers of Dickens find her so. What injustice is there in this to the real "new woman," whom, as Mme. Villard has shown, she did *not* resemble? As a matter of fact, when Dickens had a mind to draw a real "strong-minded" woman he drew her most sympathetically. Is there any of his women more delightful than Miss Trotwood? "To-day," says Mme. Villard, "she appears to us an unconscious feminist whose feminism misses its mark, since it can find no field of action amid narrow, provincial, routine surroundings." Poor Miss Trotwood!

We are to understand that it was the domination and the selfishness of man that created the lamentable type of nineteenth-century "old maid." But who were unkindest to Miss Wardle? Her nieces, members of her own sex. Who created the typical "old maid" and terrible bore, Miss Bates? Another "old maid," Jane Austen. The fact is, old maids like other human beings have their foibles. Are these never to be put into a book? Feminism seems to make its disciples terribly serious. Miss La Creevy is Dickens's example of the *femme artiste.* See, says Mme. Villard, how types of "independent women" are caricatured! She cannot laugh at Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prig, because they testify to the social contempt attaching to the nursing profession at their date! Has it never occurred to her that novels are sometimes written merely as

novels and not as *dossiers* in a "case" for the "evolution" of woman?

After all, however, there are plenty of serious novelists who do supply good evidence—more particularly the quasi-propagand sts like Mrs. Gaskell (when she chose) and Mrs. Humphry Ward (sometimes), and (nearly always) Mr. Galsworthy and Mr. Wells. Mme. Villard makes effective play with these. She has no difficulty, for instance, in showing the immense economic advance of the woman-worker during the last century, though even here her eye seems too exclusively fixed on her own sex. True, women were the chief victims of the old "factory" and "sweating" systems, but the amelioration o their condition, if I am not mistaken, came only as part of the general amelioration in the condition of "labour," without sex-distinction.

It is when she comes to the sentimental side of her subject, the relation of woman to man whether in marriage or "free love," that Mme. Villard finds her material a little too much for her. Naturally, for our novelists and playwrights can never let the too fascinating subject alone and seem to go on saying the same things about it over and over again—*con variazioni*. You have, for example, Mrs. Gaskell, so far back as 1850, dealing with the same theme as Mr. Stanley Houghton dealt with in "Hindle Wakes" (1910)—the refusal of the seduced woman to accept the regularization of her position by marriage. Then there are the free-lovers "on

principle," who end by conceding marriage to social prejudice—like Mr. Wells's Ann Veronica. There must be English novels where the "free lovers" maintain their principle triumphantly to the end, though I haven't read them; but I seem to remember several in the French language. It is all very confusing. Perhaps—I only say perhaps—those are wisest who leave "principle" in these matters to the heroes and heroines of the novelists and are content to live ordinary lives in an ordinary jog-trot way, without too much thinking about it. There is this comfort for the old-fashioned commonplace people among us, at any rate, that whatever "evolution" of woman there may have been in the nineteenth century, she remains in all essentials very much what she used to be. I can find it as easy to-day to be in love with Emma and Elizabeth and Anne—I needn't mention their surnames—who are more than a century old, bless them, as with (not to compromise myself with any contemporary English heroine) M. Barrès's Bérénice, or with one of M. Marcel Proust's "Jeunes filles en Fleurs."

PICKLES AND PICARDS

A WRITER in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* drops a remark which it does one good to read. He says that in the old French villages on the Picardy front all that the English have taught the countryfolk in five years of cohabitation is to eat pickles with their boiled beef. Very likely this is a humorous perversion of the truth; but I should like to believe it. Not from any personal interest in pickles, though that will seem odd, and perhaps incredible, to my French friends, who seem to think that every Englishman must be a pickle-eater—just as we English used to think every Frenchman ate frogs. No doubt, however, this French generalization is fairly accurate; we are a nation of pickle-eaters, and if any one asks why, I guess the answer is cold beef. Anyhow, the idea has fascinated the French mind. Among the English characteristics of which Jules Lemaître once gave a list (from hearsay, which he thought, good, easy man, as authentic evidence as coming to see England for himself) I remember he mentions "Les *pickles*." And it is the one English characteristic that has infected the Picards!

My reason for rejoicing is that they have not been infected by more than one, that in spite of all

temptations, etc., they remain (pickles excepted) true Picards. There have been times (particularly in mid-eighteenth century) when the French have shown a tendency to Anglomania. Let us be glad that these are over. Probably the French Revolution settled that point, as it settled so many others, by isolating France for the time being, and making her the common enemy. More than one of the Terrorists were Picards by race, but you may be sure they never ate pickles. But cohabitation may bring about the same result as isolation, in a different way. Our armies have lived for five years with the French; both natives and visitors have had ample opportunities for observing each other's characteristics; and I like to think that both have parted with the profound conviction that, on either side, these are inimitable. Condiments, of course, excepted. They have adopted our pickles, and we have taken their *sauce bigarade*, which is excellent with wild duck. Condiments, by the way, include the linguistic sort. We have seen the delight with which Lemaître wrote down that strange, abrupt, tart English word "pickles" in his French text. So some of our own scribblers wantonly and wickedly flavour their writings with an occasional French phrase, because it seems to them to give a piquancy, a zest. These apart, let us by all means admire one another's qualities without seeking to interchange them. Let us jealously preserve our own characteristics, our own type, like the Picardy villagers.

National peculiarities are the perpetual joy of travel (except when one side wants the window down and the other up), the *bouquet* of literature, the salt of life.

Talking of travel, we have been having a correspondence in *The Times* on the lavatories and the closed windows on the P.L.M. I am not using that railway myself just now, and I confess I like to see that here again the French remain obstinately French. France is endeared to us, like any other friend, by its weaknesses as well as its virtues; it would, for many of us, not be the old friend that we know and love without its occasional stuffiness and its occasional smells. Louis Veuillot once wrote a book called "Les Odeurs de Paris." We have all smelt them, and should hardly recognize our Paris without them—though they must have had more pungency, a more racy, romantic flavour in Balzac's Paris, the Paris of our dreams. Nowadays for the rich Balzacian smells you will have to visit some of the provincial towns of his novels, and so your pilgrimage will combine a literary with olfactory interest. I know of one old Burgundian town—I will not name it, for obvious reasons—not mentioned, I fancy, by Balzac, quite untouched by time, with pepper-pot towers, a river in a deep ravine, and well worth a literary pilgrimage if only for its associations with Mme. de Sévigné and the Président de Brosses, where you have the added delight of the richest medieval odours powerfully assisted by a tannery—an unrivalled combination! Why do so

many Englishmen grumble at these things instead of appreciating them æsthetically, as accompaniments of the French scene, as part of that varied experience which we call "abroad"? Or why do they explain them on the illiberal assumption of some inherent inferiority in the French character?

I find a typical specimen of this kind of explanation in Hazlitt's "Notes of a Journey through France and Italy," made about a century ago, when France was the very France (think of it!) that was being observed, and about to be described, by Balzac. One would have thought that the Londoner of 1824 (who must have been pretty well used to smells at home) would have found some other explanation than the physiological and psychological inferiority of the French. But hear him. "A Frenchman's senses and understanding are alike insensible to pain—he recognizes (happily for himself) the existence only of that which adds to his importance or his satisfaction. He is delighted with perfumes, but passes over the most offensive smells and will not lift up his little finger to remove a general nuisance, for it is none to him." To which he appends a note:—"One would think that a people so devoted to perfumes, who deal in essences and scents, and have fifty different sorts of snuffs, would be equally nice, and offended at the approach of every disagreeable odour. Not so. They seem to have no sense of the disagreeable in smells or tastes, as if their heads were stuffed with a cold, and hang

over a dunghill, as if it were a bed of roses, or swallow the most detestable dishes with the greatest relish. The nerve of their sensibility is bound up at the point of pain. . . They make the best of everything (which is a virtue)—and treat the worst with levity or complaisance (which is a vice)."

Well, well. When this was written French and English had not long ceased to be at war, and Hazlitt was never a sweet-tempered man. But you can still find the censorious Englishman who is ready decisively to mark off French characteristics into "virtues" and "vices," according to his own English standard. There may, for all I know, be some Frenchman who gives us tit for tat. This type of critic is tiresome enough; but there is another that seems to me quite intolerable, the critic who detests all national peculiarities as such, and would level down all humanity to one monotonous level of sameness. As though uniformity were not already the plague of the modern world! We men all wear the same hat (despite the efforts of the *Daily Mail*), women all powder their noses in the same way, and the "cinema palaces" all show the same films, with the same "Mary" and the same "Dug." For heaven's sake, let us cling to our national peculiarities!

And that is why I welcome the intelligence that the Picards have taken over nothing from us but our pickles, and that the French travellers on the P.L.M. still insist on keeping the window up. Let our

enthusiasts for a uniform world ponder these facts. And it is a relief to think that they can never unify national landscapes. The village green, the cottage gardens, the chalk downs, the chines, the red coombs will always be English. The long straight *route nationale* and the skinny fowls that are always straying across it, the poplar-bordered streams, the trim vines ranked along the hill-side, the heavily-accoutred gendarme and the fat farmer in the stiff indigo blouse hobnobbing at the *estaminet*, these will always be French. Oh, but I would give something to see that indigo blouse again, and have a morning chat with the farmer! "Hé! père Martin, ça va toujours bien? Pas mal, m'sieu. Et la récolte? Dame! je ne m'en plains pas . . . à la votre, m'sieu!" They may take our pickles, if they will, but let them remain themselves, our old French friends.

THE BUSINESS MAN

It is not easy for the slave of "copy," sedentary and shy, to know that triumphant figure of the active, bustling world, the business man. The business man is too busy, and can only be seen in office hours, when the scribe is correcting proofs or, perhaps, not yet up. Nevertheless, I once nearly saw the Governor of the Bank of England. I hold the Governor to be the archetype of the business man. In my green unknowing youth I used to take the gentleman in cocked hat and picturesque robe at the Threadneedle Street entrance for the Governor, but now know better. Well, I once nearly saw the Governor. It was on the stage. Mr. Gerald du Maurier was in the bank-parlour when a servant entered and said: "The Governor of the Bank of England to call on you, sir." "Show him in," said Mr. du Maurier with the easy *nonchalance* of which only actors have the secret. It was a tremendous moment. I seemed to hear harps in the air. And just then, down came the curtain! It was felt, no doubt, that the Governor of the Bank of England ought not to be made a motley to the view. But I was inconsolable. I had been robbed of my one chance of seeing the supreme business man.

Of late, however, the veil that shrouds the business man from the non-business eye has been partly lifted. The pictorial advertisement people have got hold of him and give brief, tantalizing glimpses of his daily life. Maeterlinck speaks of "l'auguste vie quotidienne" of Hamlet. That only shows that Hamlet (it is indeed his prime characteristic) was not a business man. For the business man's daily life, if the advertisements are to be trusted, is not so much august as alert, strenuous, and, above all, devoted to the pleasures of the toilet. And his toilet seems, for the most part, to centre in or near his chin. Indeed, it is by his chin that you identify the business man. You know what Pascal said of Cleopatra's nose: how, if it had been an inch shorter, the whole history of the world would have been different. Much the same thing may be said about the business man's chin. Had it been receding or pointed or dimpled or double, there would have been no business man and consequently no business. But things, as Bishop Butler said, are what they are and their consequences will be what they will be. The business man's chin is prominent, square, firm, and (unless he deals in rubber tires—the sole exception to the rule) smooth. It is as smooth as Spedding's forehead, celebrated by Thackeray and Edward Fitzgerald. It is, indeed, like that forehead, a kind of landmark, a public monument. Even the rich, velvety lather, which does not dry on the face and leaves behind a feeling of complete comfort and well-grooming, cannot dis-

guise it. No wonder the business man is so particular about shaving it! It is a kind of religious rite, an Early Matins, with him.

Outside the bank-parlour the mart and the exchange the business man takes no risks, and at his toilet-table he prefers safety razors. Indeed, he collects them. Sometimes he favours the sort that can be stropped in a moment with one turn of the wrist; sometimes the sort that needs no stropping at all. But, like all collectors, he is never so happy as when handling, or rather caressing the objects of his collection. Mark how his eyes dance with delight and his smile sweetens as the razor courses over his chin. Evidently life at this moment is burning for him with a hard gem-like flame. Call it not shaving! Say, rather, he is ministering to the symbolic element in him, daintily smoothing the proud emblem of his power—to which he will add the finishing touch of pearl-powder, whose constant use produces a delicate bloom, tones up the complexion, and protects the skin against the ravages of time.

When the chin has been prepared for the business day he tries and contrasts the several effects of it over a variety of collars. For the business man collects collars, too. His chin protrudes with quiet but firm insistence over some of them, nestles coyly in others, or it may be emerges with ease from the sort designed to give ample throat room and especially favoured by men who seek considerable freedom but at the same time a collar of character and dis-

tinction. Nor has he any false shame about being seen in his shirt-sleeves. In fact, he seems to be in the habit, when half-dressed, of calling in his friends (evidently, from their chins, fellow business men) to see how perfectly his shirt fits at the neck and how its thoroughly shrunk material is none the worse for repeated visits to the laundry.

Once dressed—and I pass over his interviews with his tailor (he collects overcoats), because that would lead us far and might land us, unawares, among sportsmen, or airmen, or other non-business men—once dressed, he is to be seen at his office. That does not mean that he is to be seen at work. No, it is a somewhat sinister fact that the advertisements hardly ever show the business man engaged in business. You may find him at an enormous desk bristling with patent devices and honeycombed with pigeon-holes, where he sees himself invested with perfect control and rid of all petty routine anomalies, with a mind free to consider questions of policy and the higher aspirations of his house. But not, in blunt English, working, oh dear no! He is pleasantly gossiping with another business man, who is lolling over the edge of the desk smoking a cigarette. Now and then, it is true, you may get a glimpse of him at the telephone. But then his tender smile gives him away. It is obviously no business conversation but an appointment for lunch with his *fiancée.*

Only one advertisement artist has ever " spotted "

him at work. He was addressing the board. The board all wore white waistcoats, the same business chin, and the same dry smile as the orator, who with clenched fist and flashing eye assured them of his conviction that increased production results from the bond of mutual goodwill created between employer and employee by the board's system of life assurance. Altogether, a very jolly party. But outside the world of business men it wouldn't be considered work. Really, for work it looks as though you would have to go to the non-business man. Think of Balzac's eighteen hours a day !

But the business man, I daresay, will reply, as they said to the sonneteer in Molière, that " Le temps ne fait rien à l'affaire." Certainly, the business man's time doesn't—for you next find him, in spick and span evening dress, at the dinner-table, beaming at the waiter who has brought him his favourite sauce. The business man collects sauces, but prefers the sauce that goes with everything. After dinner you may see him, before a roaring fire, holding up his glass of port to the light and telling another business man who the shipper is. Last scene of all, a night-piece, you have a glimpse of him in his pyjamas merrily discoursing with several other business men (in different patterns of the same unshrinkable fabric) all sitting cross-legged and smoking enormous cigars. This is the end of a perfect business day. And you conclude that business men sleep in dormitories.

THE END.

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